

Four People

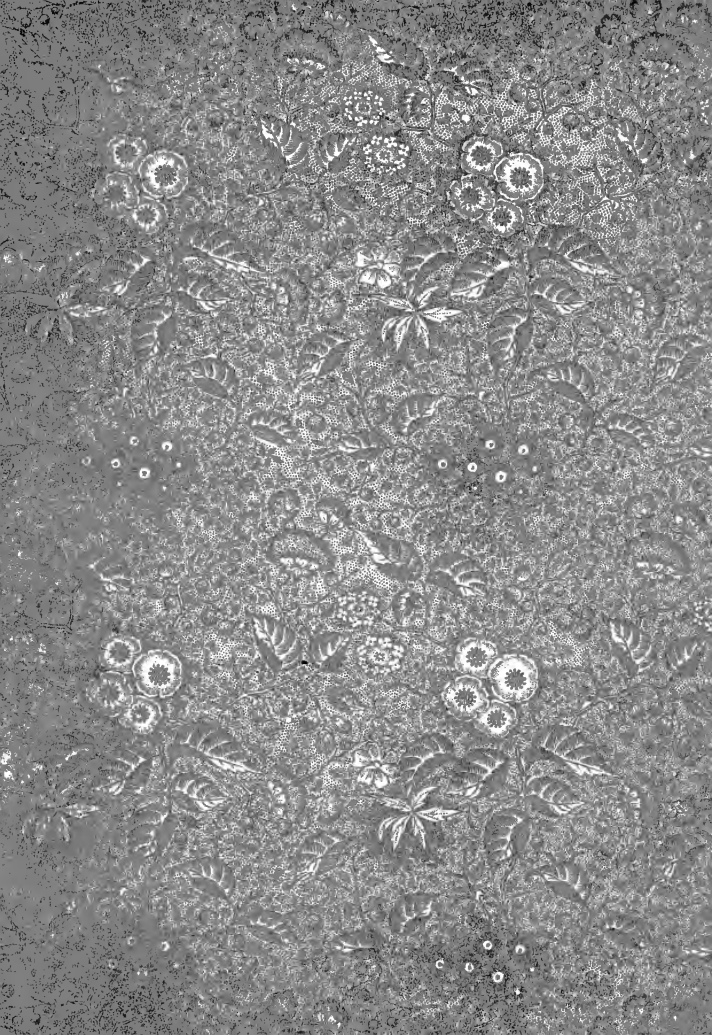
Kate Gannett Wells

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. *PS 3158* Copyright No.

Shelf. *W615 A65*

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.









ABOUT PEOPLE





ABOUT PEOPLE

BY

KATE GANNETT WELLS



BOSTON

JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY

1885

1884

Copyright, 1884
KATE GANNET WELLS

All rights reserved

Rockwell and Churchill, Printers, Boston.



Two or three of these Essays have previously appeared in the Atlantic Monthly, and a few pages of the others in various periodicals.





CONTENTS.

	PAGE
1. AVERAGE PEOPLE	9
2. INDIVIDUALITY	35
3. STRIVING	69
4. LOYALTY AND LIBERALITY	95.
5. TRANSITIONAL WOMAN	123
6. PERSONAL INFLUENCE	149
7. WHO'S WHO	173
8. CASTE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY	199





AVERAGE PEOPLE





AVERAGE PEOPLE.

AVERAGE people are the ballast of the world. Notwithstanding their usefulness, how few people are willing to be ranked as average! How many secretly feel that they are beyond the limits of that epithet, and that their acquaintances are just below it!

Those who think they have escaped the boundary line, and are to be classed with remarkable people, indulge in a perpetual mirage of thought, which, to themselves, inverts their hulk of commonplaceness into mast-heads of prominence. We look at them through their self-imposed atmosphere, and believe that they are above the water-line; but the air changes,

and the relative proportion of their attributes is plainly visible.

Insignificance is never greater than when it thinks it is just above the average. Endeavoring to avoid its limitations, it wraps itself in the restlessness which it supposes is the necessary malady of growth. It hugs its imagined headaches and heartaches, and believes that it is perpetually suffering from an access of creative thought, of original deed, which, always coming, never appears. Some men and women are ever on an uneven race for wealth and ambition; they are discontented with the restrictions of home and humility; they speak with pathos of their unfulfilled aspirations, of their weary, large-eyed gaze at society, of the hollowness of life, of the solace in "interior views," of the comfort in keeping thought-diaries, and in interchange of misty quotations with deep natures searching for peace and truth. They try to do and to be more than their mental and physical limitations allow.

The women want some loftier mission than house-work, the men something more than clerkships. So many win the public-school diplomas that they are sure they can also succeed in the struggle for a profession, or for one of the higher avenues of employment. A failure is attributed to any other cause rather than to mistaken self-estimate. This desire for advancement, irrespective of personal qualifications, is the reason for the increasing influx of restlessness among so many persons. Within its proper sphere it must always be a permanent element of human nature; but at present it is assuming undue proportion, owing to the transitional state between woman's future definite activities, her possible, much-to-be-dreaded publicity, and her former quiescence; and because of the deductions made by young men from the false axiom, that, in this country, every one has a chance to be President. Biennial State elections or second presidential terms would be

calamities to those who take “uppishness” as their motto in striving. That restlessness may often have a physical basis; may be fostered by temperament, — if so, to be eradicated, — or by special individual conditions, — then to be conquered, — are but secondary causes for its existence.

Restlessness does not necessarily progress. It goes from one side to the other, tossing up one set of miseries, and exposing for public pity another set of foibles; it hates others' and condones its own short-comings. Education and culture are constantly regarded as antidotes to restlessness; and though such only to a certain extent, their value is not to be decried; but a restless nature cannot be satisfied with study alone. Education must be used as a means of enjoyment, not as a stimulus to personal ambition, nor as the sole implement for a livelihood. If valued for its power of securing success, rather than for giving peace and strength to the mind, it defeats its purpose, and

is no longer the blessing it might become. Above culture rises the power of character, as cure for all the evils that beset us, and as the lever inserted under all difficulties. Instead of endeavoring to strengthen character by work for others, often unpaid, some seek to curb their discontent and want of self-poise by starting new schemes for the sake of novelty or personal ambition. Others strive for the same result by an endless pursuit of lectures, and many by a *dilettante* culture, when real interest in study is wanting. They aim too high in the beginning of their effort at self-improvement; enjoyment is a test of capacity, and capacity is increased by enjoyment. Religious faith or "ethical" trust can alone cure the restlessness which seeks its quietus in education and culture. Its evil is heightened by this endeavor to overstep limitations that cannot be passed without injury to one's self or one's duties. The debating societies of men are frequently opportunities for self-display, and the

history and literature classes of women but an excuse for spending a morning elsewhere than at home. The culture thus sought comes from books alone, when the mood of mind or weariness of body makes it impossible to enjoy them except for the grim satisfaction that is found in doing for one's self.

Restless people often seek to rise by adventitious means; they use others' kindnesses and throw them away when a fresh social stepping-stone has been reached; they snub those below and fawn on those above them; they appropriate others' stories, and live on capital stolen or borrowed, no thought of interest on personal obligations ever occurring to them. Such conduct is more contemptible, but not so wearisome to acquaintances as uneasy introspection, using one's self as a claimant for sympathy.

The homes of those who think they are above the average, because in their search for distinction or a great soul they are devoured

with restlessness, are decorated with cheap textiles of old-gold shades and ancestral discolorations; books are laid over literary ink-spots on the table-scarf (not table-cloth); chairs, purposely placed carelessly, are always in the way. Men wear oppressive sleeve-buttons; women divide their hair on the shadow of a diagonal and adopt æstheticism in dress, because it hides economy under the pretence of a cultured soul.

Their speech is strewn with niceties of grammar and pronunciations which are painfully correct; acute accents are placed on syllables, and *en* is added to the participle got. They never use a slang term which would avoid the use of circumlocution; they choose their substantives and adjectives from Latin, rather than Saxon roots. They talk of psychological conditions, and use physiological terms with surprising familiarity. There is no humbug so easily penetrated as that of the striving to be above the level of humanity.

Those who are below it are rough and coarse, honest or not, as the case may be ; but ever a terror. They are self-opinionated, careless in dress, words, and manner, because they do not wish to be otherwise. Want of personal refinement, absence of humor, jealousy, or indifference, mark them.

Average people, our needed commonplace friends, are the mean in the social relations of life between the two extremes of our ideals and realizations. They are constituted either as the average man or the average gentleman and the average woman or the average lady. So much conventionality has clung, in the past, to the word *lady* that the term *woman* was later employed, as indicating a being more nobly planned than its circumscribed and partial synonyme. But now no gentlewoman is content unless she is also called a lady, for the word *woman* has come to represent such intensified shortness in skirts, thickness in boots, such repulsive good sense and plainness

of speech, such self-asserting, executive ability and dominant purpose, that in rebounding from this type of femineity, we would almost rather accept the sentimental heroines of the novels of a past age. The obloquy of being only a woman was ludicrously shown by the misnomer with which a real lady unconsciously spoke of A. S. Hardy's story, "But yet a Woman." "Not yet a lady," she rightly termed it. The tone in which society utters, "She is no lady," indicates so final a settlement of the matter that there is no opportunity for controversy. The fiat has gone forth as that of predestination, and there is no use in struggling against the mandate.

Man and *gentleman* have not inverted their significance to such an extent as their feminine correlatives. The exceptional gentleman includes the man, but to be a man does not compel one to be a gentleman; — and we say manhood suffrage! If we possess the blessedness of average excellence, the exceptional

can easily be left aloft in its shining isolation.

The average man or woman understands arithmetic, spells correctly from memory rather than by intuition, is industrious, cordial, shakes hands heartily, is good-humored, sensible, moderate, free from prejudice, helpful, sometimes aggressive, generally unconscious.

The average gentleman or lady knows languages, writes an English hand, fulfils all needful demands, but does not work from real love of occupation, is well-bred, quotes bright and applicable sayings, is even-tempered, has honest prejudices, hides haste under a forced slowness, helps where there is no fear of being considered intrusive, lays the hand in another's palm as greeting, smiles serenely, laughs softly, and is self-contented, instead of self-conscious. Rarely does either the average gentleman or lady become the exceptional, for they are radically "*helplessly bornée.*"

On the other hand, average men or women have such a real simplicity of purpose that in evolution they skip the abortive growth of the average gentleman or lady and pass into exceptional gentlemen or ladies, who are not cast down at a mispronunciation, for the soul that is behind makes the tones of voice hit like hot shot on each emphatic word; and the handwriting bears a stamp of individuality which leaves the chance misspelling unnoticed. In such persons we are unaware of their motion, whether it is that of speed or slowness we know not, only that they are always coming to welcome us as equals. We are ignorant of their personal or mental habits: the books they read, the soap or brushes they use, the clothes they wear; to be conspicuously neat and well-informed is but little less disagreeable than to be unneat or uncultured. They are far above customs, peculiarities; their methods are only known by results. Knowledge is their servant, not the

cicerone of their requirements, for each one stands as a whole, not as a collection of points with intervening spaces. Their conversation does not consist of social items or of literary gossip. Their ready cordiality, sympathy, grace, and proportion mark their outward presentment. We know them best by knowing that we ourselves are never so brilliant, so learned, or so happy as when with them. The reality in them is the substratum of the average man or woman, which can be refined by the furnace of life-experience into the purest human ore ; and which makes him of humble appreciation able to cope with the man of scholarship. No conversation is so rich as that which caps the *littérateur's* and critic's reference with some bit of present, human fact.

It is this reality which makes average people so needful. As a rule they have not self-consciousness, — that venerable inheritance from American and English ancestry, — set

round with religious tenets, which prevents our ease and our hospitalities, stifles our loud laughter, and generates the well-bred smile, makes us dread our enthusiasms and our heart friendships, repels us from superior and inferior, and keeps us on the look-out for snubs. They do not aim at special knowledge, nor take positions requiring it. They acquire book-knowledge from simple enjoyment of it rather than from a desire to know more than others. Culture pursued for selfish ends misses its beneficent power. Aspiration keeps its ideals, but wisdom recognizes that the grasping of them is not within the reach of all; so average people may have had dreams of possible future usefulness or attainment, but have become content to be nobodies with slight stock of general information. They take up the daily routine of daily duties, thankful that there is much in quantity to do, living to help others, and trusting that, when old age comes, serenity of mind will atone for the lack of high

intelligence. They are guardians of their character, abiding within their limitations, hard as it is to do so, and happy because needful to the spot in which they are placed. They create a home for others, not for themselves alone, sheltering others in the wide sense of caring for and helping them, often bringing them within their own four walls. One must make one's self, not one's house alone, into a home. This is done by hundreds who live in boarding-houses, whose affection is so large that it hides the smallness of their room. Above all, average persons have a large moral sense, and are apt to judge of use, power and beauty, of story and poem, by their moral effects. They involuntarily adopt means to ends as a principle of economic force; their sense of harmony expresses itself by their choice of whatever will best accomplish their purpose. They even are religious; their trust in a higher power, which they do or do not try to bring within the bounds of personality,

gives them calmness and self-poise. They take duty as the substance of existence, gladly accepting whatever joy comes as its lustre and letting life find its justification in growth.

“Home-keeping hearts are happiest.” Average people make our homes, the homes with the sitting-rooms, which represent the common life of humanity. Let us keep the good old word, for we must sit as individuals, as families, and as nations, in order to rest, and wait, and pause, and think. There are the mothers who bake and mend, and are glad because husbands like pies and children love to romp. There are the fathers who quietly work all day that their boy may go to college; who have a common purse with their wife, and call her “mother,” as tribute, un-awares, to her blessed maternity which has beautified the home, and who, when death has led their life-long companion to another dwelling-place, quickly follow her, as they know not what else to do. It is the life

of these average people that is described by William C. Gannett in his poem

IN TWOS.

Somewhere in the world there hide
Garden-gates that no one sees,
Save they come in happy *twos*,—
Not in ones, nor yet in threes.

But from every maiden's door
Leads a pathway straight and true;
Maps and surveys know it not;
He who finds, finds room for two!

Then they see the garden-gates!
Never skies so blue as theirs!
Never flowers so many-sweet
As for those who come in pairs.

Round and round the alleys wind:
Now a cradle bars their way,
Now a little mound, behind,—
So the two go through the day.

When no nook in all the lanes
But has heard a song or sigh,
Lo! another garden-gate
Opens as the two go by!

In they wander, knowing not;
"Five and Twenty!" fills the air
With a silvery echo low,
All about the startled pair.

Happier yet *these* garden-walks:
Closer, heart to heart, they lean;
Still, softer falls the light;
Few the twos, and far between.

Till, at last, as on they pass
Down the paths so well they know,
Once again at hidden gates
Stand the two: they enter slow.

Golden Gates of Fifty Years,
May *our* two your latchet press!
Garden of the Sunset Land,
Hold their dearest happiness!

Then a quiet walk again:

Then a wicket in the wall:

Then one, stepping on alone, —

Then two at the Heart of All!

In this average home there is the sister who washes and stiffens her one silk that the brother may have another suit; who turns his cravats, and for his sake invites all the girls; and there is the brother who is a better friend than beau, and who will not, even in his day-dreams, think of her whom he wants to marry, that he may longer support the aging father and mother. Oh, it is the dear, blessed, average people whose names echo through our prayers, who make each economy a loving grace, each well-worn joke a blossom of goodwill!

Or, if wealth has lightened daily cares, it is still the average mother who lovingly takes invisible darns in the merino sock which a new one could easily replace; who changes the brilliant chromo for Correggio's angels, and

who gives the good-night kiss at each bedside. It is still the average father who bids his boy place emphasis on *honor* and *use*, instead of on *popularity* or high mark at examinations; and who demands rectitude and purity in the husbands of his girls. It is the average people who keep the churches even half-full, and the country from being only on the verge of ruin. It is their sturdy common-sense, independence through force of character, which makes them, unmindful of homage when offered to themselves, render it wherever it is due; their humble dignity, yet demanding payment of the every-day respect that belongs to each honest soul.

Some persons pass through the ordeal of finding that aspiration can never become achievement without pain. Others hide their suffering in obedience to duty, and know the cramping chills that come from never being more than one is. They see women loved with a passion which they can never inspire,

and they know that any utterance of what they feel would lose its power through their awkwardness. They see men revered for that at which they thrill but can never describe. They are always missing, always trying; trembling with the harmonies of nature, they are dumb before their own formless selves. They know that beauty finds ill expression of itself through them; that their tame and ordinary words tell of affection which is never radiant; of feeling which never prophesies, and of appreciation which is never equality; for they are always conscious of the bitter refrain, — average, average. But above it rise the solemn chords of patient resolve, quieting their hopelessness. Duty remains for them, and, as the thought sings itself into the little moods of sadness, their moan ceases, and, while gazing afar off and fondly at the great and pleasant of earth, they seek only those whom they can help by their small attempts at making things pleasant. They take, gently, the ignoring of

themselves, crush their half-shaped, might-have-been-bright answers, utter the remembered commonplaces, and do the little kindnesses, and are true to their circumscribed sphere of duty. These are the heroes of average life, the brave men and women who talk of the weather, and children, and business, and read the papers, and train themselves to suppression of all vague, beautiful dreams of self-possibilities. Grinding their souls into peace by repetition of their futilities at home, at school, and in society, by the time they are twenty-five or thirty years of age they have forgotten that there is aught but duty, except for the spasms that come as some poem or grand burst of music wakens again the struggle, — never a jealous one, only bitter, and always conquered by humility and duty, — gentle, inflexible, solacing duty.

In spite of this pain that comes to some, contentment and sense of responsibility are the prominent characteristics of average people ;

contentment with circumstances going hand in hand with acknowledgment of varying heights of mental stature, which humbly perceives that to-day's highest result may be to-morrow's future mediocrity. Contentment may have had to learn its lesson, temperament may have aided it, but once learned, the task has not been forgotten. Temperament is fraught with responsibility, not devoid of it; evil issues are to be shunned, beneficial ones to be deepened. The more of gifts we have, or the more of ease in acquiring them, the less depression weighs upon us; the stronger will we possess, the more do we owe to others. Self-regeneration can never be effected by dependence on temperament as excuse. The healthy-mindedness of average people transforms the fancied force of temperament into the actual force of character. This feeling of responsibility recognizes that contentment is a personal attribute; that yet one can do little by himself; that the world de-

mands utility as reason for daring to exist, and that, therefore, average people must justify themselves by organization if they are bent on accomplishment of work in any large direction.

Professor Price, the political economist, asked his class of English students, and, later, the New York Board of Trade, to define the difference between men and animals; but it was a woman who replied, "Progressive desire." Her excelsior was a constant, definite improvement, which necessitates Order; that is but a name for Organization, and that again is but the watchword of Progress. All must fall into line and pass on the word, or else be court-martialled. Time does not wait to gratify individual whims. The world's welfare depends on us only as we add our tiny personal strength to that of concerted action. Ordinary ardor, forethought, and imagination weld all the possibilities of service and being into action, which will employ its

strength, not in endeavoring to arrange human society according to the latest invention patented by the latest philanthropist, but by trying to do whatever duty lies nearest, while waiting for the glory of the heavens to solve its puzzles and fill the soul with abiding convictions. Such effort takes in silence the very humblest services that the universe puts within its frail hands, and finds, — it may be happiness, it is contentment, in fulfilling responsibility and duty, which lead to the happy freedom of being an average person.





INDIVIDUALITY IN HOME AND
SOCIETY





INDIVIDUALITY IN HOME AND SOCIETY.

THE reconciliation of individuality with the rights of others is one of life's problems. Its solution is constantly baffling us, yet it must be found, if our relations to home and society are to be adjusted on any equable division of mutual privileges. As Americans, we are prone to stand up for our rights, and take it for granted that everything should tend to our advancement; therefore, when we meet some one who cherishes similar ideas concerning his prerogatives, friction ensues. Whether the striking together shall bring success to each or end in destruction of

one depends upon the adjustment of mutual claims.

Individuality in its nobler form is more than mere assertion of one's rights, — it becomes the maintenance of a principle. For that one works, contends, endures, dies. Often from conscious or unconscious obstinacy, or from self-love, sometimes from real absorption in a cause without regard to self, is the individuality merged in what one wishes to accomplish. Napoleon, Palissy, Fulton, Carlyle, Emerson, an anti-tobacconist or a pro-suffragist, are all alike instances of individuality. Without it one cannot think of a reformer, or of a leader in politics, charities, or social life. That it is often disguised may but intensify its power, for individuality may or may not be marked by self-control and tact. Just so far as it possesses such virtues, does it lead to power. It can be either angular or curved. When the former, we gain Simeon Stylites, monks of La Trappe, fanatics, persecutors, disagreeable

friends ; when curved, we gain our Philip Sidney, our Abraham Lincoln, our wise philanthropists, our calm enthusiasts, our guides and inspirers. It is intensity of feeling that can either be hidden or must find utterance of itself, and thus, in either case, it becomes the national expression of characteristics. It cannot be easily defined, because it is the “ make up,” — the whole of each one ; it is the atmosphere that surrounds his moral, mental, and bodily qualities. It is both a derived and educated force. Whether it shall be our blessing or our curse depends upon the amount of righteous will-power exercised. Without it we lack the beauty of distinctiveness and the force of action ; yet the want of recognition of each other’s individuality is the efficient cause of many a discordant home and confused social action.

Each generation, as it is born, lives, and passes away, talks of individuality as if it were the product of itself alone, — a wonder only then to be beheld ; regarding it as a distinct fact in

man and a more easily recognized concept of thought, than the myriad beauty and separateness of leaf and stone, of cloud and snow-flake, the individuality of and in nature.

Somehow we all like to be called individual, if the word is applied as an adjective; the epithet original our modesty refuses, while to be told that we have idiosyncrasies or peculiarities excites our silent or outspoken ire. The frank information that the complexion is bad, tones of voice and manners annoying, is most disagreeable; but to be regarded as individual places us on a height from which we serenely take note of others' peculiarities. Individuality, idiosyncrasy, peculiarity,—they are the three terms in which our distinctiveness is rated, yet each falls short of the force of the word genius. We are right, however, in liking to be considered individual, for it is a recognition that we have striven for something; it is better to be on the heights — if noble heights— than on the plains. For something, that is

the point. Who can tell whether it is a good or bad something?

The consensus of the competent is needed as judge of the right; but the hour may come when one alone is competent. Then the multitude stand aloof and gaze. Only when the voice of the wise is as the sound of many waters do the people praise. An individual who is such for the sake of growth, and not from aggressiveness or a liking for peculiarity, feels the sting in everything that separates him from his fellows; it is painful work to be alone, yet to be alone with one's truth often means living farther from men and nearer to God, and what begins as an act of self-protection becomes the religious deed and communion with the Most High. As we swing ourselves on to the heights we must often feel the pain that comes to us through the self-complacency of others, who misunderstand our simple longing to be true, our unconsciousness is disturbed, and we analyze our motives till afraid of ourselves.

Self-inflicted torture should always bring, at last, clearer vision and thankfulness for release from self.

Long before individuality has attained such lustre that it becomes an attractive rather than a repellent force does it manifest itself in the early stages of home-life. The entreaty to the child to amuse himself, or to take care of himself, is the first open declaration of the rights of the parent against those of the child. Infantile graces and motherly love quickly adjust any difference of opinion; but, as years increase, the child finds himself under the shelter of law (ineffective it often is) which guarantees his right to a certain amount of physical and mental growth before he is used as a means of support for the family. The laboring classes chiefly reap the benefit of these laws, but in other ways than earning, for which necessity is often the justification, do the rights of parent and older child conflict. The school brings the difficulty. School-hours, home-lessons,

music, drawing, dancing, sleeping, dressing, eating, leave literally no time for the girl's mending or the boy's carpentering jobs about the house. The dining-table is almost the only place where meets a modern family bent on modern education. The theatre, the winter dance, and the summer hotel, rather than the home, furnish recreation and rest, and cause the little sympathy that too often exists between children and their parents, who are spoken of as old or nervous. We calmly allow this result to be reached, feeling that the child's individuality has demanded it; that it is right to allow him to be snobbish, snubbish, and patronizing to commonplace friends and parents; to be cross, nervous, dyspeptic, because he must have time for study. It is far better to maintain him a year longer in school, as an offset to the minutes consumed in doing family errands, than to allow him to evade them. Notwithstanding, the child is right in feeling that his school is of the utmost importance,

with which family-life should interfere as little as possible, and parents must submit to personal losses in convenience and enjoyment because of the "schooling." The study gained, the adult child has a right to decide for himself on his future occupation, unhampered by aught but parental advice. How often it is said: "I should have been an engineer, lawyer, mechanic, if my father had not wished me to do otherwise." Far wiser that the young man should struggle longer in the pursuit for self-support than bear all through life the burden of wishing he had been something else, because there seemed need of immediate decision, either from pecuniary reasons or regard for his father's wishes.

That parent makes a fortunate discovery who early sees that, while it is her duty to train the child as a child, to admonish and punish, yet that, as the years go by, her duties as direct guide lessen, and life-experience becomes the greater teacher. It is often

said that grown-up families cannot live together, because of the want of this recognition of each other's individuality. The home which unites many varying interests, in which each feels that his or her peculiar hobby meets with consideration and fairness, is the home that is richest in intellectual wealth and affection, — the home which broadens others, into which it is a liberal education to enter, — the home that makes coöperation possible.

But parents do not show that unbiassed judgment of their children's divergence from them which they manifest in regard to strangers. The adult son or daughter feels that his or her measure of difference is a source of poignant regret. That there must be regret is natural, but that the adult child should always be uncomfortable, under the added force of keen bitterness in his father's feeling, hampers his own harmonious growth ; — he grows, but with a sense of doing injury to those he loves best.

The legal and friendly aspects and advan-

tages of the relation between parents and children have often been obstructed by a semi-religious sentiment. The parent's obligation to the child is far greater than that of the child to the parent; parental disregard of the child's individualism springing often from his feeling that the child is a direct gift to him from God, and that responsibility is lessened in proportion to unconscious exercise of any duty or capacity. God is the great law-maker, but the execution of his human laws he leaves to man, whose responsibility of giving to each child the opportunity for full development is thereby increased a thousand-fold. To the child who never asked to be born, should a wise, free growth be allowed just as long as the parent lives. What right has one to bring an individual soul into the world and then through affection needlessly curb it? The child's obedience used to be demanded on the ground of authority involved in the relationship of birth; now it is demanded on the ground of

affection, and in this way the full, free nature of affection is lessened. Never ask another to fulfil a duty for love's sake, but for the sake of right. Love is broad, but right glorifies it, and in every act of affection there should be a foundation of right. Parents and children, brothers and sisters, and friends, should never appeal to each other to remit any of the individuality of each with the words, "for my sake." Give it up if it is right; retain it if it is right. There are, however, questions of expediency which often must be settled for the young by an appeal to their affection. Only by development of the moral and intellectual nature, of mechanical skill and of religious trust, can all sides of the individual be rounded into that graceful freedom of action which leaves to others as much space as it demands for itself.

In a family, the grown-up sons and daughters who possess strong individualism do not always have the opportunity to learn through their own experience. The very breakfast

loses its flavor if the same freedom is not allowed to sons in discussion of the morning's politics which the father claims for himself. After the day's toil, if the young man prefers the solitude of his own room to the inconsequent hum of the parlor, his mother sighs; if friends are with him, his sister wishes they would remain in the drawing-room. Often a daughter in her father's house cannot call anything absolutely her own. Her time is for others. Money! Her father may give her hundreds of dollars as spasmodic gifts, and nothing as an allowance. She may have permission to buy an oil-painting when her heart yearns for a water-color. She can have credit at certain establishments, but she has not \$5.00 cash in her pocket wherewith to buy an ice-cream, a ribbon, or a book. She asks for money for the contribution-box and is told that her father will attend to the family alms-giving. She must invite guests rather than be invited, as her parents like her presence at

the daily meals. She may study art, but must not go to a life school. Education has been bestowed, but, when she wishes to use it in spheres apart from the home, her parents are unwilling. Affection is the restraining power by which the actions, charities, and occupations of the adult child are limited. The father would be none the less venerated if no direct appeal was made to him for each necessity of life; nor would the desire for self-support torment so many if each daughter had a certain part of the family income. Then her gifts, her charities, her personal expenses, and her self-denials, would be measured one against the other, and each act would be her own.

Yet it is from affection, from the pride of support, from the joy of giving, from the pleasure in feeling, that the father, as parent and householder, has created his home, that he misses, unconsciously, the balance of proportion between his own individuality and that

of his children. Nor is it only his adult children who are thus repressed. The same generosity leads him to prefer gifts of money to his wife, rather than a balancing of accounts which credits her with so much due for her exertions in the household. Does he, moreover, always feel that some of the day belongs to her as much as his evening hours belong to him? Somewhere or other crop out his rights as an individual, which the wife should zealously guard; but are hers guarded as much in return? Unless a wife is considered to have as absolute a right to her individuality as the husband has to his, marriage can never be the beneficent institution for which some people consider it was designed. The same love that would protect in health, and that would watch anxiously in case of life and death, will be silent or cross when home cares and perplexities weary. It is the little rights of each other which we ignore.

Again, as want of deference to others' individualities are the silent looks, the long gaps in conversation, the taking up one's hat and disappearing on the part of men, and the sudden absorption in mending, children, or books on the part of women, — all from want of respect for each other's characteristics, which it is only courteous to recognize as the right of each individual. Silences only deepen individualities that are on the wrong side of a subject. Frank, generous conversation, with ability to be just as pleasant the next moment as if difference of opinion had not been expressed, helps each to see his or her mistakes, to understand whether he or she is acting from love of ambition, from obstinacy, or for truth's sake. Homes must learn the impersonal art of discussion, which makes the intellect grow, and leaves love and belief in other's sincerity untouched. The stronger are we, the more do we feel the force of the French proverb, "*noblesse oblige*;" not that the person is aware he

belongs to the *noblesse*, the world's greatest and noblest, through the insignia of character; but because, being unconsciously noble and great, he cannot help being tender to others; strength makes tenderness.

Another phase of the rights of individuality among members of the same household relates to questions of religious belief. The parent is bound to mould his child into the parent's highest ideal while it is very young; but, also, must he soon begin to lay before it the fact that men as conscientious or as wise as himself think differently. It may puzzle the child; but unconsciously will it be the foundation of his later liberality in judging of mankind. The parent's emphasis can always indicate that his conviction of truth is the only one his intellectual honesty justifies him in holding. Thus the abstract law of the relativity of truth, and its positive, personal application to the individual, are both maintained. While the child is young he expresses his rela-

tion to the family by going to the family church. Perhaps it is his first lesson in learning that individualism, within certain limits, can express itself within an organization, and that organization and coöperation are the fulcrums of humanity.

But when the child, as adult, has thought and arrived at different conclusions from his parent, the latter should place no fetters of restraint or affection upon his will. The constitutional tendencies of varying minds will carry them to various denominations. The conservative and the radical cannot consort in their underlying views of philosophy. The High or Catholic Church must exist for those who lean on authority; the Broad Church for those who are independent; Radicalism for those who are willing to follow thought to its more ultimate conclusions; oddities in church organization for those who must invent a sect for their own personality. Homœopathy and mysticism are akin, as are allopathy and ration-

alism. Loyalty to truth must compel one to worship where he shall find emphasis laid upon his essentials. But the individuality that goes through several creeds, proclaiming each alike, should wait until assured beyond recall that it has reached its final truth. Not the sprouting, but the full blossoming, mind becomes the willingly recognized leader. The sprouts of growth often prove abortive. Intense individuality, which makes one search for truth, keeps one from rendering apparent homage to another's truth on the plea that religion is only a matter of life, rather than of intellectual opinion. A doctrine in the long changing of human interests is a greater force than a man, and one's individuality and one's reason must be very slight if loyalty to ideas can be subserved to the personal gratification of self-improvement, supposed to be effected by *regular* attendance on a service whose creed is disbelieved. The line of difference should always be drawn at the farthest point;

all possibilities of convergence should be accepted, and individuality should surround itself with an atmosphere of deference for every form of thought, and of reverence for every noble deed.

In spheres apart from home or church life is the want of individuality felt in its more humorous aspects, though its lack may be as harmful as elsewhere. One of the chief characteristics of modern society is its sameness. The groups may be different, but the people in each group are outwardly similar; not only, on the whole, do we dress alike, but we eat and live alike. If our neighbor has moved into a Queen Anne house, we must have at least a room furnished in Queen Anne style; men wear black dress-coats; women, soft-toned hues; our embroidery is in olive crewels; and we eat oysters everywhere, because it is so much safer to imitate than to originate. Most of us have no original capacity. We admire or praise gregariously. We are like a flock

of sheep, and not always does the first sheep jump the right fence. We are cowards, and neither praise nor blame independently. A little reading-club was studying a certain poem, and one of its members said, "I think it is awfully stupid!" Then went round the whisper, "Isn't she bright, funny?" If each had dared to say her own thought, it would have been just what this lady said; and the universal fun would have been denominated common-sense. There is affectation in euphuistic words and simpering tones which sometimes passes muster for a while, but only to cover the person with final disgrace. The literary criticism of a magazine or newspaper column shows whether the writer is stamped with an irrepressible individuality that puts itself into what he writes, or whether he is fearful, and praises gently all alike.

It is very hard to maintain a graceful but true individuality under the soft pressure of society and frightened friends; but, if the

world is to be any better for our living in it, it will only be so in proportion to our distinctness of thought, style, and mode of expression. Then society becomes rich and brilliant; the *bon-mots* of the dinner-table whet the appetite, and the opinions of the evening coterie become laws for those who have no time, or are too lazy to think. There must, however, be a force that shall prevent our individuality from too speedy expression of itself, or from interfering with the rights of another, or preventing his expression of himself. Conventionality is the rightful restraint upon individuality, the heavy armor of what has been, not the elastic armor of what one likes; but, as with any other coat of mail, it should not be thrown off until the wearer is able to exist unguarded. The laws of custom are scabbards that sheathe the cutting weapon.

Nothing should grow more slowly than individuality, or have its steel more finely tempered. An individuality of crude opinion or

of words is not the material which moves the ages. Conscientiousness should guide its growth, self-sacrifice illumine its path, and love of beauty moderate its pace. Fanatics, reformers, constantly injure their work by insistence on the rights of their own sacred cause, without regard to the conventions and amenities of life. The reforms of a century hence will not be accomplished in the despotic manner in which many have been, and still are, carried on. The liberal leagues, the temperance cause, and many religious movements, are sullied by the intensity with which one would put his right into some one's else being. Many a society is started to carry out some special individuality, which by honest meditation and compromise could have been incorporated with some already existing institution, and thus have been saved the device of a new name and the expense of a new set of officers, etc. The organized individualism often succeeds, but oftener is short-lived.

How careful ought one, then, to be in forming new plans, lest they become a cause of social stoppage or discord!

All men and women should feel that in some manner or other they are bound to stand for some truth or deed; that in some way they help humanity; that they are always to live on the noblest heights of life, with purpose ever in view. It may be a general or a special purpose; but there must be some *one* motive besides the indefinite desire for indefinite goodness, which shall shape out an individuality. Only those men and women whose life-work is clear before them can afford to lay it by, as the side duties of life spring up for immediate attention. An intense purpose waits its fulfilment, and, in waiting and ripening, nourishes all the little seeds of endeavor, and refreshes the waste places in others' lives. There cannot be individuality without intensity of feeling or conviction. Our modern life demands such a complexity of interests and

such a generality of knowledge that the mass of people, the non-active reformers, forget to care for one subject more than another, and so become just like everybody else. Half of originality is simply daring to be true, simply saying just what one thinks, but in a pleasant way. "He said just what I thought" is the frequent reflexion made on bright people, who were no brighter than the listener, but who were truer and less self-conscious. Obituaries, resolutions of societies on valuable deceased members, and eulogies on the living, have all the same flavor, as if every one were a twin.

Although meek acceptance and repetition of opinion can be tolerated in an evening party, it becomes intolerable in committee business and parish meetings. From laziness or cowardice both men and women invent excuses in order to account for their absence whenever matters requiring decisive action or opinion are likely to occur. The plea of a previous engagement or a headache has

become an equivalent for a falsehood. If we never spoke or acted without previous thought (though the thought might be in the distant background of accumulations of experience), and then gave our opinion, and did our deed from intensity of conviction, but with an open-mindedness to constant new impressions and experiences, men and women would oftener stand for some one definite mode of thinking and acting. Conscience is the foundation of individuality. Let that be developed as carefully as a sense of correct English; then, like each one's English speech, it will have its own tone and quality.

If we only dared to be honest, society would gain in intellectual and moral strength. We all think mightily after we have left a discussion. Do we never despise ourselves that we have lacked the moral courage to stand for our convictions, and do we never hate ourselves that we have none? When one has the courage of his convictions he becomes a

leader somewhere, for evil or good. One of the most confirmed inebriates in a "Washingtonian home" had a peculiar fluency in prayer, and led at all their meetings.

To avoid monotony in ourselves we must seek expansion of our ideas and deeds; but only by being mindful of others' rights and needs. Liberty loses its value without the added grace of tenderness in its action. To grow ourselves in our own way, to satisfy the wishes of those who hold a different ideal from that towards which we are striving, — there is the difficulty! And it is only solved by patient love. The home, with its varying interests, can be rendered happy only by learning the secret of the recognition of each other's rights and peculiarities, and that each has a claim to self-development but to a certain point. When sickness, death, or poverty in the home check further progress in some special line of work, no complaint should be uttered; the inevitable must be accepted in brave silence, with the re-

membrance that to fight against it is self-destruction. When free growth means only unlimited selfishness it is an evil to one's self and an annoyance to others.

It is much easier for those who have a mission to fulfil to prepare for that than for those who, because of their indefiniteness, must seek for some special work; yet only as work becomes specialized is it perfect. A woman who, in fancying herself an individual, places any art, profession, or business above that of making her home a centre of affection and brightness, fortified by good, plain cooking, drifts into selfishness.

In order not to inflict upon others our individualities, hobbies, peculiarities, idiosyncrasies, — however they may degenerate, as does the meaning of each word, — the laws of solidarity and compromise must always be observed. The first is a broader law than “Do unto others as you would have them do to you;” do to others *more* than you want for

yourself. The solidarity of mankind demands that any personality should gird on the panoply of good manners ; and it is because of the lack of this much praised but rare possession that individuals become so disagreeable, while the purposes for which they strive may be those which all hold.

The law of compromise ever adjusts the balance between individuality and solidarity ; the first preventing any mean yielding to low ends or unworthy motives ; the latter making perceptible the relationship of individuality to the highest possible standard of personal morality and devotion to noble ends.

From such a union of forces comes a far higher development than if individuality had remained aloof in shining isolation. The bud of purpose is deepened in color from its secrecy ; self-assertion is maintained with firm but gentle touch ; the constant accretion of self-control strengthens every fibre, though by processes that seem tedious to the young

aspirant to full and free expression of himself in thought and action.

The law of compromise leads to no deceit. It is the self-protecting garment of society, worn at home and abroad ; it is not the abandonment of a principle, but the waiting until the arrow can go straight to the mark.

“The sun set; but set not his hope :
Stars rose; his faith was earlier up :
Fixed on the enormous galaxy,
Deeper and older seemed his eye :
And matched his sufferance sublime
The taciturnity of time.”

Indefiniteness belongs to youth. With growing years come definiteness and fixedness ; with middle life, wisdom and tenderness. The earlier qualities lose their sharp angles, though their centre remains more deeply buried than ever in intent. Fanaticism ceases, enthusiasm grows, help is rendered to all, not to one. Still the struggle between heredity and present

circumstances overshadows us. The moment demands our yielding; but our inheritance raises our individuality into bristling prominence. We are prone to sarcasm; our grandfathers were; it is part of us; but the moment shows we should lay it aside. Which will conquer, the inherited or the educated individuality? Each has his own peculiar passion for pleasure, meanness, or extravagance, and the inherited and the educated must wrestle, step by step, until, by repetition and aggregation of results, the victory is settled forever on one or the other side of individuality. The evil effects of heredity can be lessened, not only from generation to generation, but from year to year, while its blessed influences can be strengthened. As science is eradicating hereditary disease, so is education working upon evil mental peculiarities; even now it is only cowardice that says: I have a miserable disposition, because my grandparents had

the same. An individual to make use of another individual as an excuse! Very much of a slave is he to himself if he allow himself to employ such a pretext in palliation of his want of effort.

The rightful extent of individuality must ever remain a varying line; yet a long view of life demands that we prepare ourselves by constant progress to be useful and honored; and for that must we have time and opportunity for expression of the best that is within us. Because truth is relative will we work for what is our truth; work, always ready to give it up if nearer claims arise; always able to keep it until the moment comes again for action. The laws of solidarity and compromise will stand as sentinels over others' rights and needs. With individuality they form the triad that labors for and with each other, that all may grow into fuller individual life, each home freer and happier, each church

more enduring, each member of society working through definite deeds and thought into that clearness of vision which reflects the harmonies of the universe.





STRIVING





STRIVING.

IN Puritan homes each child was exhorted to do his "duty" until the word became so significant of outward observance that its heavenly relation was lost. Modern ethical homes have taken "right" as their banner motto, and though it is capable of rousing enthusiasm, the zeal it creates would be for ideas rather than persons. Both duty and right are impersonal terms; midway between them, in use and meaning, stands "character." Generally in speech the verb *to have* precedes this substantive, adding the idea of a personal possession to its abstract statement. As it is something to be got, and that getting is its

secret charm, children do not wince under parental entreaties to strive for it, and their elders eagerly claim it, as proof that they have manliness and power.

Duty is done, character is made. Both indicate performance, one is long growth, the other may be single seed-sowing. Doing duty makes character, and individual character becomes the underlying structure of nationality. The possession or the want of it, makes the difference between one man and another, between the voter who cares for his country, and him who gets a dollar for his ballot; between the men and women who strive for professional or public renown for the sake of social ambition, and those who, whether "praised or blamed, guard well the trust they neither shunned nor sought."

When character is regarded as an epitome of duty alone it becomes a mass of heavy, moving power, bent on the accomplishment of its ends, and, by virtue of its weight, bearing

down all obstacles with glacial rigidity, rather than an embodiment of grace and beauty as well as of power, conquering by its attractiveness as much as by its solidity, for grace is just as much a part of character as is truthful action. How imperfect are all definitions of character when it hovers about us as a dream of beauty, a blessed reality, an intangible, actual union of strength and loveliness, as an ideal of a friend, the realization of our Christ, the blending of all separate perfections in the fatherhood and majesty of God! Without irreverence or familiarity can we say that God is character; that in Him are united the artist of the exquisite foreground with its tiny patches of beauty and the creator of the distance that pushes its shadows into chaos. The child longs to resemble his ideal, the parent; the parent places his ideal in the exceptionally great man and woman, and they reach forward after divine excellence, which, because of its unapproach-

able loneliness, stands pathetic and majestic before us.

Character is something beyond what we see in a man. It resists circumstances, is self-sufficient; it grows. It is an assemblage of qualities which distinguish one person from another; it is a particular constitution of the mind; the name by which we are known; the name, when a noble one, at which all gates swing wide; the name that shames and greatens.

The germ of character is constantly developing until it rises into immortality, to unfold there into full strength and beauty. The slight selfishness, that yet is justified in seeking heavenly rest as a panacea, is forgotten in the intensity with which, while living, we work for those on earth and pray for the loved ones above.

In a great character there will always be found two elements, the ideal and the impersonal: the ideal keeps it ever advancing; the

impersonal keeps it ever deepening, as not self, but others' good, is its universe. Over both preside conscientiousness, keen, quick, observant. It is the sensitive plate on which impressions are received; the index that points to hours and deeds; the chemical reagent that crystallizes actions into forms of beauty and usefulness; the spur to activity; the mirror of foolishness; the solvent of perplexities.

Character itself is formed as a gradual accretion, which is utilized into thought and action. It begins at the earliest stages of existence, and, whether we look back upon our own formation or guide the growth of children, we find distinct layers overlapping each other. Each is marked with the tender lines of grace and the bolder ones of duty, the law of moral necessity ruling that each shall perform its full part in the making of the perfect character. Some few men stand as peaks whose grandeur is so stern that one hardly

guesses at the sweetness which lies hidden in the nooks of sentiment below their rugged exterior.

No trait of character is more necessary or prominent than truthfulness. Without it we build ourselves only to fall to pieces; carelessness and ignorance may cause an untruth, wrong-doing a lie, that is, the direct intention to deceive. The first lie in the child, and the quickly uttered lie in after life, come generally from the natural or unregenerate impulse of self-defence. We lie to screen ourselves, and then one by one the chain of lies is forged that ends in weakness, sin, and ruin. The utter foolishness of a lie introduces its comic aspect; we all object to being "found out," for it argues a want of skill. Like an anodyne its effect is palliative and temporary, not remedial. Cumulative or single falsehood always ends in destruction of itself. Then it is a universal wrong, and, when thus regarded, there seems something grand in not adopting,

for the sake of the universe, a paltry, short-sighted means of defence. It is language that binds us all together ; by it we understand and depend upon each other ; to misuse it is to falsify our mutual relations. There can be no real helping, no friendship, no wide business, no true internationality, unless words are truthful.

The twin of truthfulness, its counterpart, is honesty. Both older people and children start indignantly on being told to be honest, as if stealing were confined to commodities alone. Yet there is much actual theft in society. We steal each other's ideas, patterns for dresses, embroideries, furniture, and display them as if inventions of our own brain. What is done by our French maid we call ours, her wages giving us a lien on her handiwork. There is also what sisters call freemasonry, and what sisterless people term purloining, which consists in free use of each other's ribbons and jewels. Members

of a household, as well as strangers, should observe the law of *meum and tuum*. Umbrellas are borrowed and lost, books are returned dog-eared. We steal another's time by asking him to do what we can do ourselves; we promise to stay ten minutes, and we stay thirty. We steal other's health and patience by inflicting upon our friends the history of our own troubles, using them as a safety-valve for ourselves. As visitors we do not regard the honor of our hostess' family, but, when away from it, tell some amusing weakness belonging to it. We steal into each other's confidence for purposes of curiosity, and, worse than all, we steal affection, often to reject it when it has lost its primal value. An affection, once deliberately won, is a burden or a privilege forever. Too often the stronger nature appropriates the weaker one, alienating its friends, and then, satiated, preys on another. It is said that women especially are prone to this fault, because so

many feminine friendships are also partnerships. But it is equally found among the relations of married people and of men with men. We also steal each other's reputation by withholding praise when it is due, by delicate or careless insinuations; by alluding to the disagreeable, in an acquaintance, without mentioning the extenuating circumstances. We often lessen another's impulse to greater striving by non-utterance of our admiration and love for him, our cool manners acting as non-conductors of energy. Want of appreciation of others becomes injustice. We do not try to understand before judging; people's motives are often better than their awkward results, actions. We are more liable to become depressed from lack of approval than self-conceited from knowledge of it.

Perfect truthfulness proceeds from noble simplicity, which seeks a worthy end rather than tawdry effect. Having given itself, it evokes as free surrender in another. Its

honest praise is never the hollowness of idle compliment; it is glad tribute gladly paid. It passes along the by-ways of life, and divines those hearts which are not strong enough to rest alone in self-respect, but need outward approval as recognition of effort.

Simplicity is often the result of early striving and of petty victories. Human nature soon passes out of the childlike, happy stage of unconsciousness. As conscience awakens, as self-reflection is observed through the co-existence of others, consciousness develops; it is the New England hereditary gift; it becomes a tormenting, prismatic light caught from every angle of life. Only as purpose deepens are the many colors concentrated into the white ray of simplicity. Sin, frivolity, selfishness, pass into rectitude, seriousness, disinterestedness; one becomes earnest to be or do something; one cares to make others happy; one's own shortcomings, misery, or happiness are all lost in intention; and

thus one grows again into unconsciousness, where it is best for peace's sake to remain; conscious of his purpose, unconscious of the way of obtaining it.

But peace and purpose demand self-control, which is the rock on which the whole character rests.

Unless self-controlled one can neither govern nor follow others long, for all take part in helping mankind, as assistants or leaders. Self-control is mastery of one's self. It is self-restraint; the ability to hold back from doing the wrong or silly things, goaded by the whip of conscience.

Self-control teaches that temperance applies to much more than meat or drink; that it is neither the demand for too much of any one thing nor the constant search for novelty. We throw away what is old by the law of fashion, rather than by the law of use. We call for new books, new *bric-à-brac*, new pleasures; we hunt for old-fashioned furniture

in mockery of the new ; we are not creators, but takers, each wanting something more than he has, no one ever reaching the height of his social ambition. We ask that life shall fill each hour with new pleasures, never remembering that temperance always leaves on hand material for a good time later. We justify our restlessness by calling it the spirit of the times ; we go farther, and make temperament or inheritance an excuse for inactivity.

This is cowardly, fatal to effort, sets a miserable example, and results in transmission of less moral strength to the next generation, which should inherit even more richly from us their past than we have from ours. The present is always trustee to the future.

Self-control often seems unnecessary, and brings disappointment in plans which we had hoped would succeed, if it had not proved foolish to urge them. It also teaches patience with one's self and others, bravery, superiority to circumstances, contentment, power to work,

and ability to bear the joy or sorrow of life, and thus freedom. Men and women alike need it, for the more that one sees of life the less perceptible are differences of sex, and the more prominence do varying types of character assume. Every one should have it, he who commands, and she who endures; the narrow life and the broad one, the prisoner and the traveller, the clerk and the merchant, the belle of society and the unknown worker in her attic. Yet, certainly, the semi-public life (may it never be the publicity of political life,) on which women are entering more and more; fairs and clubs, sanitary and charitable work of all kinds, are teaching self-control. Women, now, dare not snap at each other, as they might like, if they want to gain their end; they are learning to compromise honestly, to allow others their way, and in social judgments to separate opinion from practice. It will soon be a proverb: Never think you know a woman till you serve on a committee with her.

Self-control also gives ability for promptness and the observance of order ; the first, though formed as a habit, can soon become a principle, and so ennoble the wearisomeness of details. It is the clock-work guiding life, while unpunctuality is a robbery of one's own, and a sure robbery of others' time. The principle clinches the purpose by carrying it into action at once. It sees that if a thing is right to do now it is wrong to do it by and by. It wastes not its powers for work, and never loses energy or freshness of feeling ; it accepts no excuse of carelessness or absent-mindedness, for excuse in itself implies that the reason offered as excuse was not necessity. It leads to the great law of Order, which allows no minor derelictions in personal lives.

We are governed by this principle while yet governing its details. Many persons become slaves to a fixed recurrence of action, considering that recurrence alone as order ; but self-sacrifice often demands the neglect of little

things which orderly habit seems to make imperative, since some higher good to others requires instant performance. Such neglect, however, is but the fulfilment of order, which seeks that the greatest duty be first done. Its chief value in life is this adjustment of the relative importance of actions. We are very apt to esteem minor necessities as major ones, and so miss the grandeur of opportunity. Those who have carried on the world's work have performed it by selecting what was first or most important, and not simply by doing that which turned up first. So much of life is lost because order is supposed to mean a place for everything and everything in its place, — a repetition of a mere routine of hours and occupation, rather than the observance of this relative proportion of duties.

That perceived, then concentration turns perception into action, and is the sign of power. All great acts have been fulfilled by its command, either slowly, as execution de-

manded time, or quickly, by what is termed impulse, which is, in truth, instant self-possession, acute presence of mind. How slovenly is most performance, while the great forces of the universe, daily little experiences, mental struggles, weak ambitions, special interests, or general work, join in the clanging call to concentrate, to gather up scattered human efforts, and aid in thought and do in deed ! The loose thinking which seems inherent in so many persons is due to want of concentration. All cannot apply their minds to all subjects ; some, indeed, can grasp none that require abstraction. Their incapacity soon betrays itself, as is seen by the helpless wandering of the eye, the confused smile, the feeble joke, the harmless incoherence of their words. Most people so fail, though yet admiring power in others. How beautiful and inspiring it is to watch a face as it really thinks ; to see the ugly lines fade away ; the eyes deepen ; the forehead broaden and shine ; the mouth grow firm, even

the whole posture showing the making of a thought!

Continued, persistent application bends time and material to its purpose. Through it the money-market might replace the term speculation by foresight or judgment, and inventions might correspond to human needs rather than to human ingenuity. Five minutes' absorption of the child's mind in the effort to learn his letters teaches more than their names. Busy people have the most time; as they give all their strength to whatever they are doing, so it is soon done and well done. Scatter-brained work and play is lengthy and fatiguing. Patience, Perseverance, and Thoroughness, the three elements of concentration, enter into the composition of a genius.

Greater than any other result of character is its blessed privilege of usefulness, the chief function of our being, the proud prerogative that man shares with nature, the test and measure of our worth in doing and being. In doing, it

consists largely in working for other people in their way, not ours. Too often we like to make them happy by the method that gives us the least trouble, and, if they will not rejoice, we turn upon them and call them ungrateful. When other success wanes that of usefulness still remains; attention to others' wants, and sympathy for them, create ability to aid, and practice brings tact and grace. Each year, day, and hour is the maker of opportunity to him who takes the horizon as his boundary line of helpful work.

For those to whom limitation has forbidden activity there is the usefulness of being, the passive side of character. The being ready not to do is the hardest lesson of life; not to do in household striving, in mother's cares and longings, in noble, personal ambitions, in sharing the great throes of the world which ultimate in victories of social progress, in shaping anew the warped intellectual life, which degenerates into affectation of literary values; and

in keeping at bay, by watchful, tender care,
death, which seeks our beloved.

The helpless soldier sang:—

“I lay me down to sleep
With little thought, or care
Whether my waking find
Me here — or There!

“A bowing, burdened head,
That only asks to rest
Unquestioning upon
A loving breast.

“My good right hand
Forgets its cunning now,—
To march the weary march
I know not how.

“I am not eager, bold,
Nor strong,—all that is past;
I am ready Not To Do,
At last, at last.

“My half day’s work is done,
And this is all my part;
I give a patient God
My patient heart,

“And grasp his banner still;
Though all its blue be dim,
These stripes, no less than stars,
Lead after Him.”

Let reverent, joyful thanks be ever given for usefulness in doing and in being. We may lie down tired with our efforts, we may wake more tired, but as we think, “What now?” there flashes across the mind some fresh act of self-sacrifice or of ability to help in some hidden or visible manner, and there comes instant strength to reap fruition. The purpose sends the blood to the weary limbs and the cheer of the heart quiets the aching head. Never too poor, too ugly, too dull, too sick, too friendless, to be useful to some one. Now, one can live, no matter what may be the pain in living; and

heaven is use, too. That glory does not with life.

Then "Trust in all things high" dwells within us, and, as we trust others, we make ourselves worthy of trust; guarding another's confidence as our birthright, never deceiving or betraying it, for such betrayal makes sore hearts and lonely lives. We are neither jealous nor suspicious, and believe another right until we know the contrary. Much of our early trust passes away from us like an outgrown garment. Knowledge proves insufficient, creeds shrink before experience, friendships wither, ideals pass not into realities; but trust in the universe deepens as years add wisdom. It is that trust which enables us, whatever heaven may be, to bear the bitter fact that we no longer have father or mother, husband or child, — that we are helpless, often homeless. Hardest of all is it, at times, to trust God's righteousness, which runs so adverse to our ideas of right. Why, if we did not

trust far more than we think we do, we could not endure the misery of others. Immortality finds strong ground for belief in our trust that our longings cannot be deceived. And if we trust, unconsciously to ourselves, that feeling has shown itself in the light of our eye and the elasticity of our steps. "God's in his heaven ; all's right with the world," sings Pippa. We sing it, too, though her God and our God may have little alike except the trust we give to each.

With trust comes that element of character which, starting in childhood, has not its full value until the intellectual nature of the man or woman has weighed the problems of life and the secrets of knowledge. Reverence, without which no poet is a seer, no scientist a lover of truth ; reverence, reaching from the commonest fact to the grandest discovery ; from the humblest impulse to the noblest deed. Our reverence

“ . . . is foolish by falling below,
Not coming above what God will show;
His commonest thing hides a wonder vast
To whose beauty our eyes have never past.”

It is reverence that gives the finest touch to chivalry and the deepest meaning to truth ; it is an attitude of mind which permits us to see, enjoy, and honor. It grows with our growth, though too often self-imposed limitations check it. Our irreverence is due to want of sympathy and observation more than to ill-will. A knowledge of the hard times in other people's lives, of their brave little attempts for goodness or success, and of all that careful human eyes and microscope and telescope have found of law, and love, and beauty fill us with reverence. Finally, as life widens, the faculty of worship and appreciation is developed, until every half-known law or half-comprehended goodness is the “ vision of some marvel come to light.”

He who from his mountain-top of reverence

places trust in the unrolled plan of life assigned him, seeking use in grand or humble guise as his goal, girding himself with a mighty will to bring forth the evolution of order, keeps life sweet and brave by his daily truth. He stands as, — character, the word losing its abstract signification in the grace and dignity with which he has invested it, for the realization of the ideal is the aim of all true individuality.





LOYALTY AND LIBERALITY





LOYALTY AND LIBERALITY.

LOYALTY and liberality are habits of thought transmuted into modes of action. In the modern desire to be free from prejudice we are losing loyalty ; because truth is so multiform, we forget that its purpose is single ; we wish to be broad, and we become vague ; we dislike partisanship, and we grow indifferent. We think of loyalty as a patriotic virtue, and forget that it is the outcome of all intense conviction ; we even feel it to be a mark of illiberality, while yet the want of it is impoverishing our natures, and is pauperizing society. We are so afraid lest we be called sectarian that, in our insistence upon all possible good in

others, we hesitate to affirm what is good in our own opinion, our very charity often causing our disloyalty.

Loyalty involves the relations between ourselves and some truth or duty. Liberality the relations between ourselves and persons. Both demand courage ; one demands breadth. Each should keep equal pace in growth, for each is the complement of the other. Loyalty is faithfulness and adherence to one's country, friend, faith, duty, or opinion, by open acknowledgment in word and act. It is always free and generous, and seeks to strengthen whatever it deems worthy of belief. It gives persistence and enthusiasm to character. It is a certainty of faith, which may or may not be a heritage of joy. In either case it may cause separation in thought or act from those who have other objects of fealty. It should include the propagation of one's belief just so far as such spreading of it does not entail persecution. About any unit of thought, environed by

loyalty, cluster action, organization; the thought crystallizing into creed and deed. Unquestioning enthusiasms and friendships develop loyalty at an early age, when its declarations are apt to be those of unreasoning prejudice rather than of calm, intense conviction based on thought and experience. It cannot exist in its nobler, permanent aspects until it has fortified itself by liberality.

Liberality must always be born of knowledge, for though, like Loyalty, it may spring largely from sentiment or kindness, it would fail in many of life's emergencies unless it also possessed wisdom. It is the power to look at events, persons, and thoughts from another stand-point than our own, which requires sympathy, created by insight and comprehension. But we fancy that at times special occasions justify us in terming another's ideas absurd; because we are sure we know, and that the possession of such knowledge should necessitate moral obligation in action; thus including

the idea of ought in that of liberality, as if our right ought to prove another's wrong, and to compel him to adopt our ideas. Liberality must adjust the equation of ought between ourselves and others. The extent of the application of our ought to some one else establishes the foundation of social relations. Though the world teems with individual and organized efforts for the conversion of others to some one's notion of ought, their attempts should never bear the red mark of persecution, as they have borne it in the past.

Many people consider liberality as a product of the heart. They fancy that definite opinion excludes liberalism, and fear that, the more they know, the less certain will they be of arriving at conclusions; yet they vaguely feel that mental decisions are necessary. Though definite opinions can abide with appreciation of another's convictions, people like to be freed from the burden of making up their mind. Much that passes muster for liberality is sham,

or indifference, which latter is the tempter's own device for cheating one into laziness. Clear, definite convictions result from the union of liberality and loyalty. When loyalty stands upon some narrow point of opinion, liberality surrounds it with proofs that truth also lies elsewhere, and intellectual somersaults are the result, leaving the mental acrobat on one and another rock instead of on the table-land of thought.

Every one should know what he believes, and why, in religion, politics, social affairs, moral obligations, and philosophical considerations. Ignorance is no excuse for accepting results from another without the trouble of examining them. Such questions cannot be answered by books alone, as they need one's own life-experience and that of others. If the reply corresponds to one's needs then search ceases, for salvation cometh when belief is fraught with strength and honesty. Negation often is as definite and noble as assertion; the

agnostic may be as loyal as the Christian. The arrogance of an exclusive sectarianism demands omniscience, but patience and humility constantly say, "Not yet;" and refuse acceptance of any dogma until convinced. It is hard to persuade zealots that loyalty can call for negation without a corresponding assertion. Their little science teaches them that a vacuum must be filled, and, when their opponent expresses his dissent from their views, they imperiously demand what is believed; and cannot comprehend why some idea has not rushed into the mind to take the place of what, in their opinion, should have occupied it. Unknown to the thinker, as to them, crystals of thought may be forming, although his habit of self-restraint forbids their taking definite shape, until they have absorbed all they need from the surrounding elements. It is hard for ultra-minded people to believe that liberality does not belong to any one sect or party. They leave conversative, expedient

organizations, and form minor associations with the false battle-cry of liberality.

When liberality is considered as a product of the heart, as a gift of temperament and intuition, it lacks that permanent force which results from knowledge and experience. Intuitions may be safe, but as they are not conscious, logical processes, they should not be regarded as authoritative. Imbibing by a process of faith is uncertain ground for conviction. Under its guidance the kindly heart cannot reach unto the depths of suffering or joy in another which self-experience has never probed. Intuition may be safely followed through average ordeals, but experience leads open-eyed and clear-minded amid unusual perplexities.

Must and ought are the adjuncts of illiberality, which is the hinderance of another in his pursuits and opinions. Even the force of personality should be careful in imposing itself upon others to such a degree that their free

will is destroyed. The freedom we claim for ourselves is owed in return. Each finds the practical answer by his own gauge of intuition and experience. The world-wide relations of every person are settled in concentric rings, ever widening from their first or innermost circle. The idea of ought, as opposed to or mingled with the conception of liberality, finds its first circle of decision, embraces those of its own household, the final circle including the brotherhood of humanity.

The manner in which people and events are spoken of in early home-life creates the first impressions, received unconsciously, which will affect the child's future way of thought and action. Soon he notices the variance between words and deeds; he hears his mother say that a certain course of proceeding coincides with her idea of right, and, at the same time, he sees her help a friend in ways averse to her expressed opinion. He

does not yet know whether to characterize her words and acts as inconsistent or liberal. The puzzle has begun which will haunt him for years, until he, too, has learned that a broad outlook and a fervent faith necessitate each other. School-life soon teaches him to be loyal to truth and honor, in withholding from mean and doubtful ways with such pleasantness that he attracts his fellows into right observance rather than repels them from the circle of his friendship. College and boarding-schools enforce these lessons with a power that each one knows best for himself.

Church life again presents them. Within a hundred years religion in America has burst the shackles that fettered it. After State conventions had ceased to support the church by public tax, creed tests were still retained, belief in which was evidence of eligibility for holding office. Not only must Protestantism be accepted, but, in Delaware, belief in the Trinity; in Pennsylvania, belief

in God and the inspiration of the Bible. When the Constitution was framed, in 1787, it read: "No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." Religion, though freed from State control, is still in bondage to the church. The communion is oftener a test act than a memorial service. Narrow convictions have led to the founding of new sects, the separation within the division, each based on a point more or less broad, from whose contracting influence humanity perpetually escapes, for the law of progress ever makes the liberality of to-day the sectarianism of to-morrow. Earnest belief, tempered with comprehension of other creeds, has been the fulcrum which has lifted church-life into the philanthropy of humanity. Contrast Loyala, the sectarian alone, with Fénelon, the sectarian and the liberal; Edwards with Channing, Wesley with Wilberforce, John Knox with the author of

“Theologia Germanica,” the schoolmen and priests with Columbus and Galileo.

In the reaction from mysticism and church theology the claim to eternal life has been founded on doing to such an extent that one is ready to shout with the revivalist, “Doing is a deadly sin.” What has become of rapt absorption in the thought of something which is not of concrete apprehension? Where now are the faces that should make a Sistine Madonna and a St. Jerome? A loyal, liberal faith takes not meanness as a synonyme for deacon, nor petition for prayer, and finds the equivalent terms for religious and political economy in the text-book of life. The reconciliation of science and religion is the finding and the worshipping.

Many are so liberal up to a certain point that it is almost thought that they have the breadth of universal sympathy; but suddenly they reach a bound beyond which they refuse fellowship. Many find it hard to be fair and

generous towards those who, in a spirit of reverence to all truth, feel they have not yet proved a God. If one, himself, holds a steadfast belief in Him, and wishes to make others feel as he does, can he not yet see that certain minds must have what they deem facts as proofs? Can he not wait? Must others believe instantly because he does? His God must be a very small God if his impatience can hurry others into belief. To wait, and to plan while waiting, is the secret of liberality's action. The weakness of human nature is nowhere seen more strongly than in the involuntary presentation to the childishly finite mind of the infinite questions of the existence and abode of God, and of immortality. What it can never answer it first asks. Because our lives are all aglow with the hope of immortality shall we scorn another who looks upon it simply as a reward for striving here, or shall we shudder at him who looks bravely into immensity and sees nothing nearer than the

divine obligation to love one another on earth? It is hard to do neither, but the more we know the easier will it be. One's own mental strength should facilitate comprehension of others' doubting or waiting attitude.

Words, like symbols, acquire special meanings, and are the keys to sectarian as well as to scientific storehouses. The kindly deception that permits one person to use a word in a mythical sense which another accepts as a statement of fact is incompatible with accurate thinking. Rather say: Your fact is my symbol; to you the fact, to me the symbol, is God's call to both to make the thoughts of each definite and clear. An Episcopalian clergyman preached for a Baptist parson. At the close of the sermon the Baptist said: "I am sorry I cannot ask you to partake of the Lord's Supper, but you are not a close communicant."—"Oh," replied the churchman, "even if you should ask me, I could not stay; for I cannot receive the bread and wine from one

who has never been ordained." A very narrow distinction, exclaim those who stand outside; a very real one, say those who stand within.

It is in minor matters of social life that our illiberality constantly surprises us. Reforms are most notable examples of it. As, for instance, those who do not wear mourning can appreciate neither the protection it affords nor its graduated hues. A violent anti-tobacconist refuses the name of gentleman to a smoker; a teetotaler deems a glass of sherry a sign of inebriation; even puddings must lose their flavor under reformatory zeal, and silver tankards of the past must be termed "christening bowls;" a man who smokes and drinks may be fit for heaven, but not for marriage or society.

Unconventionality brands conventionality as narrow. The longer one lives, however, the more is the safeguard of ceremony valued. As almost every social convention had its ori-

gin in some use or fear, the outward utility of politeness, though not yet making its valuations aright, must keep pace with inward recognition of equality. The American knows no fear, but as often loves to praise as to peck at his superior. Witness the adulation offered our political heroes and our friends, as well as the slander cast upon them.

Are those out of society liberal towards those in it? Many a fashionably dressed and handsome girl has to suffer the reputation of being frivolous and haughty, when she has only a youthful capacity for enjoyment and a love for pretty things. Unkindness is often shown in the feelings towards a popular person. It indicates, at least, self-command and tact to be popular, yet a popular person or lecturer is regarded as suitable for the masses. Such narrowness includes self-denunciation; we are part of the masses.

Women, especially, formulate conventional judgments, graduated by approximation to a

certain standard of manner and dress. They accept or outlaw one another by the number of buttons on gloves, the shape of bonnets, and a Greek or French "tournure." Externals are generally a good basis for primary opinion, but never a reason for illiberality towards those whom taste does not approve. To refuse to associate with others because their manners are not suited to our liking is provincial, and provincialism is the essence of illiberality, while cosmopolitanism is the essence of liberality. Business and preoccupation cannot be offered as excuses for illiberalism and provincialism. An unknown or queer person is invited to a family dinner. An estimable woman who wore greens and purples of bygone shades, who lounged rather than sat, and who had lived in Boston for several years, excused her shortcomings by explaining that she had never been invited to a meal where she met any other lady than the hostess. Who has the courage to stop

and speak *first*? The one who is most liberal, who knows that cordiality takes no more time than rudeness.

Want of liberality and excess of loyalty to one's surroundings introduces a comic aspect into charities. Rich people often prefer to employ a missionary to visit the poor, rather than to go themselves, because "such an one is more like the poor's own kind." The Associated Charities tries to leap the gulf of inequalities by saying, "Visitors and Visited." The gulf of difference is there; insight and liberality cannot merely span it, but fill it up. The poor are too proud to say they are poor; the rich, too anxious to escape any imputation of *nouveau riche* or aristocracy. A liberal spirit accepts classifications as outwardly true, and then, through sympathy, forgets them in action.

Housework and children are common ground for all women, politics and trade for all men. The poor are as interested in the

wealthy as the latter are in them. A certain old lady, who in her days of eyesight had been in a printer's office and later was supported by charity, said: "Young girls nowadays dress dowdy when they come to see us poor folks, and call it equality. If it were, they wouldn't make such a fuss to hide it. I'd like to see their silks and satins, and hear about their beaux. It's as good as a love story, even if you haint ever had the chance to get married; but they just talk about my rheumatism and how to cook oatmeal till they don't do one a bit of good."

The demands of socialism in all its various phases can never be adjusted until capital and competition put themselves in thought at the stand-point of wages and coöperation. Comprehension, not of their wrongs so much as of what they think are their wrongs, is the only way in which one can meet, by argument or by law, the requirements of the working-classes. House-keepers have to contend with

one form of ignorant, aggressive demand. The I-am-as-good-as-you-are feeling is the root of the claim for more wages and of impudent answers. Our servants are our children; home is a missionary field; insight understands why our cook grows tired of always being a cook. We go off to our parlor; she stays by the cooking-stove.

All have not yet learned to be actively liberal towards colored people. A formal and touching protest came from certain of them, begging for more equal chances in the struggle for self-support. The city gave their children, it said, the same instruction as it offered those who were white; but when colored girls at the North graduated they must either be washer-women, or marry and bring more children into this unequal world; while white girls found places in shops or as teachers, they were rejected, because other employés or school-children disliked them, and all black maidens did not wish to go South as instructors.

The colored girl of the same ability as the white has not the same chance in earning a livelihood. If nature establishes the limits of color, it also permits educated labor to succeed, yet custom forbids. A friend found a vase, black in hue, placed on an end of his mantel-piece and a white one on the opposite corner. He looked at them shudderingly, uttered the word, "miscegenation," and ordered them removed. His feeling about the blacks could not even tolerate the mismated vases.

There is also the illiberality of the classical against the scientific tendency in education. A Greek scholar denounced President Eliot as prejudiced because he favored the introduction of more scientific studies, which the erudite speaker thought were best fitted for laboring people, and a president of a Western college characterized Harvard as only suitable for an aristocratic community. Graduation at Cambridge or Yale is equivalent to a mark of social superiority, supposed to be incomparably

better than any mental results which may follow from careful, individual work in a Western or Southern college ; the graduates from such an one, on the other hand, are sometimes anxious to conceal the name of their *Alma Mater*.

And is there nothing to be said about the illiberality of those of the regular school toward homœopaths, and of the latter towards the former? Surely each man honestly believes he is right. Does loyalty to a conviction that a "pathy" is wrong compel quibbles in order to escape coöperation in social or benevolent work? Does it justify the charge of "intellectual dishonesty"? Another school may be stupid, but not immoral. Personal morality, as affecting his mental or medical uprightness, should, at least, be granted to an opponent.

There is a liberality to be observed in personal habits, even in food. If children are trained to take what is on the table, they are

taught a virtue which will serve them in after years, when exposed to the chances of restaurants and a friend's kitchen. A vegetarian is a terrible guest. An Englishman, at a breakfast served in his honor, declined dish after dish. At last the hostess said, "You will try some potatoes?"—"Yes, thanks," was his glad assent; but, as he beheld them baked in their brown coverings, he observed, "I never eat them unless boiled." Two tired ministers were invited to tea at the house of a millionaire. The weary guests fed on dainty viands and drank water; "for," explained the host, in uncertain tone, "my wife finds that as tea disagrees with her, it must also be of no benefit to others."

Leadership and union in work need liberality, for there can be no hearty acceptance of another's guidance without it. Then the intelligent and the unintelligent, those who are conventional and those who are earnest, can work together for the sake of a common

good. Mutual peculiarities are, however, to be understood and avoided; thinking of them is amusing, speaking is dangerous; capacities are to be recognized, claims adjusted, self-seeking avoided. When will men and women be large enough to accept another's valuation of them which does not place them where they put themselves? How many are there who are willing to lead until fitter persons are found, and who then will withdraw, feeling grateful that they have done some good, and still more grateful that others can accomplish better results than they? How many are there who are brave enough to accept the mandates of a liberality that gives one measure and refuses another; that understands weakness and strength? Clubs, unions, societies, organizations of all kinds, political, social, reformatory, or beneficent, will never reach their highest consummation, nor will society be a broad, deep channel of usefulness and pleasure, until liberality is the patent

mark of each ; until we can bear to hear the truth about ourselves ; until we can be brave enough to utter it about our fellow-workers.

It is a blessed fact that life compels us to work together, though in our thoughts and with our words we stand far off from each other. Is my neighbor wrong because I am right? No one yet can say he has attained unto absolute truth. The truth is absolute just so far as it is each man's duty to do only that which he believes is *his present* truth ; but that truth may be relative to another person. Relativity of truth is the fundamental equation between our differing beliefs. Its relativeness is no excuse for not believing something, and no excuse for not wishing that others might arrive at our stand-point ; while it is the reason for acknowledging the why and wherefore of another's belief, and for liberality in our thought and treatment of them ; as variety is a divine law of human nature. Do we ever know each other or ourselves? Is not the best of our

natures unknown or dim to us? That glory, almost was within our grasp, has it gone? Was it our fault; or could not we reach it?

“Perhaps in us all there are heights of will,
And shadowy deeps of thought,
A land in the heart of each one's life
With self-surprises fraught.”

Shall we merely tolerate each other? That is too small a word. We are to comprehend another in his truth, as he understands us in ours. The larger unity to come must be one of purpose; for the faith and hope of each person will sing themselves into a creed. With reverent spirit for others' purpose must we all approach any offered feast of friendship. Another's thought is not alone to be transformed into our experience, but to be transubstantiated. It thus becomes a vital, individual product again in some one else. Fundamental agreements are deeper than surface contradictions.

Through loyalty shall we never feel that truth has been lessened by our cowardice, for having established its convictions, upon carefully examined premises, they have become data of assured action. Loyalty never shrinks from its own statement ; it feels its truth is the only truth worth living for, but it does not rush towards instant fulfilment, for, while believing, it is willing to work and wait quietly. Loyalty stands by the falling friend, while liberality understands why he falls. Loyalty takes Recognition for its motto, clings fast and sees wide. Because it is the reverent worship and advancement of the true, it feels deference towards others' reverence ; yet

“It yields no step in the awful race,
No blow in the fearful fight;”
and still,

“The hidden river runs,
It quickens all the ages down,
It binds the sires to sons.”

The river of human sympathy, of liberality.



THE TRANSITIONAL WOMAN







THE TRANSITIONAL WOMAN.

WHAT is this curious product of to-day, the American girl or woman? Does the heroine of any American novel fitly stand as a type of what she is? and, furthermore, is it possible for any novel within the next fifty years truly to depict her as a finality, when she is still emerging from new conditions in a comparatively old civilization, when she does not yet understand herself; and when her actions are often the awkward results of motives, complex in their character, unconsciously to herself? Pessimists speak of woman's foibles as constitutional, and displayed alike in all ages and countries. Optimists,

accepting this statement, add to it the factor of evolution, and believe that just as the race has been modified physically by climate and conditions of life, so will the former type of woman, by elimination of the weaker elements and survival of the fittest, be essentially modified into something larger and better than has yet been. But, as in all modifications something valuable is often lost, there is danger that many of the present tendencies amongst women will be developed into undue and harmful prominence.

The expression in the faces of the past and present woman indicates a change. A certain noted physician, on receiving a new case, always calls for earlier and later photographs of his patient, that he may compare the changes wrought in the course of years, which may have contributed to the present condition. Such a gallery of portraits might help in a diagnosis of our modern woman. The peace and equipoise, the hauteur, united with uncon-

sciousness of self, are all gone. The face of to-day is stamped with restlessness, wandering purpose, and self-consciousness. The trusting religious tone has vanished from conversation. A modern "lunch" affords opportunity for testing ordinary feminine talk, which is never bad or vulgar, on the whole, not even frivolous, but is marked by superficiality in its discussion of novels and subjects, though showing great familiarity with all known and to be known publications. Each woman could talk far better than she does if she were not hampered by self-consciousness. An Englishwoman said, "At home, politics and party measures are discussed at our ladies' lunches, but in America one must first go to a circulating library before accepting a noonday invitation." Latterly suffrage has become a feature of conversation, but often in a humorous or questioning vein rather than in an argumentative or serious manner. Gossip—not scandal—and allusions to conventional modes of philan-

thropy take the place of discussion of yesterday's sermon or the last congressional debate. If one wishes a foreigner to form a favorable opinion of women, apart from any special vocation they may have, he should be invited to a ladies' lunch, pure and simple, and he will be compelled to admit that American women are easy, brilliant, kindly, cultivated, and altogether charming. But he will read restlessness in many a face, will notice an *empressement* of manner, a little hurry in the gait, quick tones of voice, a business air, suggestive of the surmise that all these women are "in" or "at something." The leisurely, graceful element is wanting.

Society has grown so complex in both town and country that it is difficult to assert any universal predicates of either, without fear of contradiction. The New England woman should be taken as the largest representative of the whole country, because the Southern woman is minus her driving qualities, plus an

added grace and piquant deportment; and the Western woman is minus the Southern charm and the New England self-consciousness and morbid conscientiousness, plus an active self-reliance that has already resulted in successful individual and concerted measures. In all these women, however, the wish for progress has made such havoc that the woman of to-day differs from the woman of the past.

As justification of this new departure it must be remembered that we are no longer living in an age marked by a dominant cause. Work, government, society, knowledge, philanthropy, yearly grow more specialized, whilst our foremothers had above them their faith in the special providences of God, and around and below them a daily struggle for material needs. Life was grave and tender in these women, who felt that they were the founders of a new race. And just as they were beginning to realize that less praying and less manual labor would obtain their daily

bread and make them heroic mothers of men whose motto was yet to be Renunciation, came the Revolution, to give them another unified impulse towards simplicity of life, dignity of thought, and trust in God. All women in these two periods thought and worked alike for the same reason. Subdivision in feminine interests was just creeping into slight notice, when our last war again united women in a single cause; but the country had grown larger, and faith in public prayer, church-going, special providences, less. The material comforts of the last fifty years had disintegrated simplicity of life, and rendered possible a speedy arrival at modern complexity; and there was rarely an ineffaceable stamp of dignity left on those who nobly had borne their part in hospital and field and sanitary work, North and South. Now thousands make temperance their holy cause, other thousands consider female suffrage as such, and then the feminine hosts

break up into companies of one or more hundreds each, all clamoring for their special hobby, cause, work.

Such diversity of interests has some advantages, but it also prevents that directness and simplicity of aim which made our great-grandmothers such devoted, honoring wives, and such mothers filled with the spirit of the Lord, and has reacted unfavorably, to a large extent, upon the home. Not only are the four orthodox kinds of Thanksgiving pies in groaning larders gone, not only has the sceptical feeling arisen that turkeys may be roasted and pumpkin pies eaten before the canonical November day, but the mother-spirit that stuffed the turkey and strained the pumpkin is going, and a new theory arising, that husbands and children ought not to like pies, and that if perchance such taste is inherited, it must be supplanted by the notion that the wife and mother is made for something beyond catering to appetites uncontent with plain apples and cheese for dessert.

Men naturally care less for the home when the wife does not first render service unto it; for, being married, it has become her duty, voluntarily assumed, but sanctioned by the State and sealed with marriage vows. Not long ago a man and woman, swinging each other's fingers, were wending their way to the altar, when a dispute arose as to which one should purchase the cooking-stove. "You," quoth the man, "for you will do the cooking." "Not so," said the woman. "I am not going to do all the cooking." The dispute waxed hot, and separation ensued.

Not only are pies in the home decreasing, but affection for it is also on the wane, as the need of individuality within it becomes more definite. But few sons and daughters have yet learned to sweeten the necessary transit from their early submission to their parents to later equality with the father and mother, or to a still later guardianship of them, with reverence for the parental relation in itself. Women do

not care for their home as they did ; it is no longer the focus of *all* their endeavors ; nor is the mother the involuntary nucleus about which the adult children assemble. Daughters must have art studios outside of their home ; author-esses must have a study near by ; and aspirants to culture must attend classes or readings in some semi-public place. Professional women have found that, however dear the home is, they can exist without it. Many still remain at home, but ask, in their midnight musings, why it should be right for a man to accept that position which the woman, on account of her home, must refuse. The query itself could not have arisen half a century since. Many men refrain from marriage, fearing that the homes offered by them will not be the chief delight of the wife, who will be capable of finding pleasure and occupation in other avenues of interest. It may be a selfish and manlike feeling, yet it exists ; and after women have adjusted their position, men *may* read-

just themselves to it. The simple fact is that women have found that they can have occupation, respectability, and even dignity disconnected from the home. The tendency is, that, in the discovery of this possibility, they are losing somewhat of filial tenderness, of the loyalty of kinship, and of close, concentrated affection, and acquiring more of self-assertion and universal expansiveness.

The day of religious diaries and confessions is past; but a moral and intellectual self-consciousness remains, fostered by our system of education and public examination, which is much to be deplored. Very few are free from it, for it is an indigenous product, and only by education can be altered into the educated unconsciousness of middle life, or stamped out by rare buoyancy of health and spirits. What was woman made *for*? was the former question; and the quick answer came, For the glory of God and the solace of man. Now the question reads, as put by the teacher and so-

ciety, What is she made *of*? The school-girl answers, So much per cent.; the belle says, So much beauty of head and shoulders poised at such an angle, plus certain inflections of voice and grades of manner to friends and the populace; and the earnest "committee woman" answers, Of executive force, insight, and sensible views. They all know their professions and their wants; some stifle the smile, lest it be unconventionally broad; others repress their enthusiasm, lest it argue a lack of *savoir faire*; and those who apparently are natural know they are natural. It is all a knowing. They are not, perhaps, unhappy by result of unfavorable comparisons, because dignity compels acceptance of the inevitable; but there is little of happy humility, and a great deal of indignant dignity in thought and manner. Our public schools, our seminaries or colleges, train the pupils to meet an audience! No wonder that the managers of the Children's "Pinafore" found no timidity in its infantile performers.

With this growth of modern internal interviewing has come a loss of grace. Stiffness and hardness of manner was a Puritan characteristic, after a time softening into grace of posture, slowness of gait. But now some walk forth on high heels, balancing their shoulders like scales; others step squarely on broad soles, and lo! the world knoweth thereof; others still are always in a hurry; grace is wanting in all. Go from the streets to the drawing-rooms; how few move, look, or speak gracefully! The slow dignity and the careless ease are alike mannered. Every one knows that every one else is looking. Self-consciousness, frivolity, and also earnestness are banishing graceful badinage, easy postures, lingering tones. A brilliant woman becomes satirical, with relapses into humor; the humor collapses into extravagant statements. Timidity or decision in a woman speaker or presider recalls the fact that it is a woman who is before one; her decision often appear-

ing like a heavy borrowed article. The charm of being, of simply being one's self, apart from having a "mission" or "views," is lost in the zeal with which women are seizing upon the new fields of usefulness thrown open to them.

Every one must be or want a definite something. Two instances may serve as illustrations. The wife of a literary man, herself a writer, came to this country, and was dined and lunched. "What does she want?" asked the earnest women. "Nothing!" was the indignant reply of her society friend. Again, a sculptor went back to Rome and told how he had called to see a certain lady because he liked her, when, on his third visit, she asked, welcoming him, "Is there anything I can do for you?"—"As if," he said, "a man could not see a Boston woman without her wishing to aid him. Can't they just be themselves, and let us like them, and not eternally have objects, views?"

The value of existence is becoming the outward *bête noir* that is stamping itself on the face, voice, and gait of woman. Do something, be of worth in yourself, form opinions, is the imperative mood in which the times address modern women, whose likenesses will be recognized at a future day by this dignity of "woman's-mission" look, — a gallery of photographed "causes."

Instead of grace there has come in many women an affectation of mannishness, as is shown in hats, jackets, long strides, and a healthful swinging of the arms in walking. Ready-made clothing for women seems to have finished their emancipation from the *rôle* of women of the past; for with a much lessened need of sewing has increased a readiness to show a so-called superiority to attractiveness, which as independence has certainly succeeded.

More pronounced than any mannerisms is the difference in the goal of past and present

ambition. Formerly, to be a good house-keeper, an anxious mother, an obedient wife, was the *ne plus ultra* of female endeavor, — to be all this *for others' sakes*. Now it is to be more than one is for *one's own* sake. Knowledge is valued as an end rather than as a means. Of course there is much attainment of knowledge among women that is purely philanthropic; but also there is a vast amount of culture that is purely selfish. Some have a provoking knack at using all their knowledge; the politeness of others forbidding inquiry as to its date of acquirement. They willingly seem more learned than they are. They “do” books as some travellers “do” Europe. They are dogmatic, and possess a certainty of conviction where others disagree, that is amusing and aggravating. I accept your premises, but doubt your conclusion, is a simple statement; but it suggests memories of authoritativeness and slight philosophical acumen. Then, women quote, quote, quote, and say,

“Don’t you remember?” At a literary dinner this quotation had grown overpowering to a thoughtful friend of only moderate memory, and when repeatedly addressed with “Don’t you know?” she said, apologetically, “Oh, I can only think!” There was silence.

A middle-aged girl generally knows more than her parents; but not always as much as other people whom she has not yet had the discipline of meeting. This dogmatism is not so apt to show itself on special points as in the general way of regarding the universe, for the fact of being a product of this age confers the supposed intellectual power which hovers in the atmosphere. “To him that hath shall be given” is literally believed. “I can,” instead of “I’ll try,” expresses much of modern feeling. The ability to make much out of little is not confined, however, to American women, and is in itself power. It is always more striking to make a point than to see the whole of an idea, and answers better for the short de-

mands of society, not of life. Our grandmothers would stand aghast at the aphorisms, quaintnesses, points, of the lady conversation-alist of to-day, and would miss the old-time calmness, fervor, and acceptance of life's duties.

There is also an increasing tendency, in spite of fashionable and benevolent cookery schools, to disparage housework and sewing. Women hint to each other that they can use their time to greater advantage; that they were born for something better, being of the educated classes; and that manual labor is for the unintelligent. Then, when intelligence directs this mass of unintelligence, it thinks it is doing a great deal, and often sighs pityingly over itself. Often from want of manual knowledge these educated housekeepers are compelled constantly to "change help" and have garments altered. It is doubtful whether there is the same patient endurance of the hard conditions of life now as even fifty

years ago, while there is more intellectual pretension.

Advertisements, the higher intelligence offices, and bureaux of labor testify to the presumed value of brain over hand education, although the country is suffering for good handiwork of all kinds. Women who apply for situations want places as teachers, traveling companions, translators, copyists, journalists, lecturers, and orators. One woman wanted some work of "renumerative beneficence, as the Almighty would be wroth with her if her powers remained unemployed; yet she must gain her daily bread while awaiting the results of her pen." Another, clad in dowdy trimmings and frowsy feathers, brought an article "written in a few moments' leisure on the stairs, just thrown off" (she was tending table till something better turned up), as proof of what she could do. A lover of her kind, but no thinker, wishes for paying parlor audiences. Still another craves some large

hall, where she can discourse on “the — isn’t sure what word to use; something which shows that religion and science don’t exactly contradict each other.” Others have lectures on Icelandic and Persian mythology as known through encyclopædias, on the Visions to Be, on the Centripetal Force of all Systems of Philosophies, on Woman’s Duties, Needs, and Missions. All have something to say, and all think they ought to be helped. Some one said that within the last two years a hundred applications had been made to her personally, all for work which required more or less exercise of brain-power; and that not in a single case was there evidence that the applicant possessed more than the desire to be cultured, rather than culture itself.

Eloquence is such a noble gift that it is sad to see so many women who have studied oratory, anatomically and physiologically, philosophically and psychologically, desire to make their living by readings and lectures; if

they do "orate" well it is often from art, not feeling; they lack the impulse, for truth's sake to tell the truth, which alone constitutes eloquence. As many women can speak nobly and well and with no thought of self, and as elocution is a most useful study, it is hard that others must speak and read merely because it is a tendency of the age.

Women are also in a transitional religious condition, partly because it is hard for them to unlearn the lessons of dependence, and partly from social fear, self-distrust, and religious reverence. As doubt and agnosticism are "evoluted" in both sexes, they do not belong here as special feminine developments. Women, however, need beware lest the man, author or preacher, become their guide, rather than the truths he enunciates: a leader clogs as well as clears the road in thinking out a subject.

A serious evil, arising from the greater information about everything which women

now possess, is a vast amount of superficial physiological knowledge based on feelings rather than on facts. Women often harm themselves thereby in body, soul, and mind. No one who is not a specialist can generalize on "feelings" or facts.

As the result of this capacity of woman to exist for herself alone, and to be happy and worthy in such existence, comes a reluctance to look upon marriage as producing the highest development of woman. There is a pantheism of the affections as well as of the intellect, and women are feeling that "causes" and knowledge are better fitted to ennoble them than the ill adjustments of a union which is anything less than perfect love, entire trust, and mutual honor, — motherhood and discipline no longer being considered equivalents for the crosses that may arise.

Woman's past condition has not been satisfactory to herself, nor is it wholly a matter of pleasant history for men. Because a few

women already have proved that housekeeping and culture, energy and grace, executive force and affection, a profession and a home, can coincide, it does not follow that the fulfilment of certain tendencies with many more women is not imminent, and much to be regretted; but just as fast as they become more pronounced must there be a reaction against them, which will eventually establish the balance between the women of the past and of the present.





PERSONAL INFLUENCE





PERSONAL INFLUENCE.

THE relative position of men and women, it is generally conceded, furnishes data concerning the moral progress of a nation ; yet their relations to each other, and the duties involved in marriage, present unusual difficulties to be solved, because we are still ignorant concerning their extent. One generalization is immediately confronted by another, accusing the first of falsity and exaggeration ; individual experience is sure, but limited ; though no science and no method of general action can be based on private experience.

Propriety itself has so long regulated the utterance of enthusiasm, knowledge, hope,

endeavor, that almost any attempt toward expression of truth is sure to offend, unless couched in scientific terminology; but noble propriety, founded on the relations of things and not on the conventionalities of society, demands that impropriety should be recognized, spoken of, branded and remanded, not to oblivion, but to the most earnest efforts of adult men and women for its cure. Evil lurks in "society," leads an open life "in the lower ranks," and constitutes the *raison d'être* of many philanthropic schemes; yet there is a terrible indifference to the subject, though annual reports, wretched newspaper stories, and the highest class of novels deal with it. To bring it into a work of fiction, unless the book has a distinct moral purpose, is both inartistic and injurious, as familiarizing the mind with evil, the existence of which should only be dealt with under the plea of truth, duty, or benevolence. As most light reading is manufactured for entertainment rather than for the

development of such attributes, it should be freed from this incumbrance of evil in either an attractive, picturesque, or saddened aspect.

Because of feigned or real indifference and the "proprieties," wrong-doing is not fading away under the auspices of many wise and fashionable reforms. When moral law is declared to be more obligatory than instinct, and the reasons for such belief are deemed matter for serious inculcation, the populace demur and the educated and æsthetic enjoin silence even in the home.

Cannot something more powerful than ever yet has been tried be brought to bear upon the eradication of evil? Must not that power be the weight of combined public opinion working in concert which shall demand that children be educated into knowledge of what is true? Great stress is now laid upon the importance of a right intellectual elementary education; the morals of truth and energy are not neglected, but instruction in the special

part of morality with which we are now concerned is overlooked in most *homes* where *only* it properly belongs. Neither this generation nor the next may witness any palpable improvement from such teaching, but the children of those who themselves have been well taught could become unfamiliar with evil because accustomed to a higher morality.

Also such thorough search into the causes of evil is demanded that, the causes being known, their annihilation may be effected. These causes have been divided into the "natural and accidental." Under the first are included peculiarities of disposition, like vanity, indolence, and grossness of character. Granted that these are peculiarities, perhaps even inherited ones, they are dependent on the will for cultivation or partial extermination, and upon the absorption of the individual in voluntary or compelled labor. The moral and intellectual tone affects the physique; and full employment in one direction negatives undue

occupation in another. Whatever strengthens the will-power or ennobles the character is an aid in the battle which the individual must fight for and by himself, — yet not wholly by himself; for the accidental causes foster the natural ones, and the help of the community is necessary in order to destroy the first. Only by universal action can successful war be waged against these accidental causes, and in proportion to the diminution of their number will the natural causes find a natural death. The accidental causes, on the other hand, are within the control of the community and of the individual; and, though not capable of immediate government, they can be met with counter-arguments and checks till finally adjusted or overthrown.

Among these reasons the most potent one for the existence of evil is the difficulty of obtaining remunerative employment. There are thousands of women in and around New York who do not receive over two dollars a

week, and the temptations induced by such wages are tremendous. It is starvation pay which drives hundreds into immoral life. They may be wretched workwomen, but almost any labor is worth more than two dollars a week; and fuller pay would kindle ambition to produce better work. In all our large cities and towns the underbidding of wages is contemptible; goods, whether in the raw material or as made up, pass through hand after hand, in the modern subdivision of life, until the last producer—generally a woman, living in an attic or cellar—can barely earn enough to pay for rent and one decent meal a day. The poorer she is the less in one sense are her needs, as ignorance and poverty create their own boundaries of want. But along the whole descent to her condition are others who cannot eke out the means for their necessary wants; and, when we say we all have a right to life, liberty, and happiness, we forget how society constantly curtails the

extent of the latter. With more happiness there would be less sin; example and starvation often leading one to seek temporary refuge from despair and hunger. The poor are willing to work, and look upon it as their rightful lot; but they claim that capital should be so adjusted in its relation to the laborer that even those who are farthest removed from wealth should receive enough of its benefits to prevent the agonized suffering of extreme want. When that pressure is removed, they acknowledge that happiness, as their right, must depend upon their own powers of creation, endurance, or capacity for looking on the bright side of things. Many, among the immense number of women who vainly endeavor to support themselves by the needle, succumb at last to a temporary but easier method of livelihood, though despising themselves for preferring the transient alleviations of food and warmth to the continued struggle for an honest life. There is no confession

more touching, no contest more pathetic to witness, than that of some of these girls, born poor, living to be poorer, with no power to do well any one thing, even menial work, thus receiving wretched pay; probably supporting some relative, or child, if left widowed or deserted, and at last giving up the fight for goodness, and yielding for preservation of self and of others.

The cause of evil that ranks next to that of ill-paid remuneration for labor is that of intoxication. Wrong-doing and love of drink are so inseparably connected that it is hard to distinguish cause from effect. When the first step in evil has been taken for other reasons, this second cause reacts and intensifies the capacity for farther ill-doing. All grades of sin recognize the service that liquor renders them, and do not hesitate to apply its aid to their purposes.

The overcrowded dwellings of the poor are the third cause. The proximity of parents and children, brothers and sisters and boarders, in

one room, permits familiarity with phases of life that accustom children to regard them as proper normal conditions. Purity is often unknown, the brutality of a low nature is easily aroused, and children know and do what seems impossible.

Certainly these three causes of evil are within the scope of human remedy. While science and political economy are puzzling over the formula of their methods of procedure, individual benevolence is endeavoring to find means of prevention in individual cases. These causes abound among the lowest ranks of sin, and call forth compassion equally with abhorrence. Removed from them, another range of life is met with, due to other circumstances, though all these social circles of sin intermingle, and it is hard to say where one begins and another ends. This aristocracy among the erring is one of its most painful features, and yet often most touching in the unexpected kindnesses rendered by one of

larger to one of smaller means. In this upper class of evil the chief factors of its existence are loneliness and indolence; absolute want is not the exciting cause so much as absolute loneliness. Take the familiar case of a young girl who has come to the city, and has been fortunate enough to find work, but knows no one; who comes from and goes to her shop alone, and passes her Sundays and her evenings in silence, — for, in spite of unions, and societies, and churches, it is hard to make acquaintances; some are too busy, others too tired, and many too awkward. ~ Finally, a stranger or friend appears, who enlivens the lonely hours, and the end is soon met: there is no need of following the downward course; apparent friendliness takes possession of real loneliness. Weak and wrong in the woman? Yes. But, again, this evil of loneliness is one that society and that other women are bound to correct. There should be no need for loneliness to accept such refuge, when so many thousands

of women have homes and hearts, and when hundreds of women are working to protect just such girls; but these hundreds are not enough. Every true woman should enlist in personal search for the friendless. When each holds another up then there will be no occasion for falling. Indolence presents a feature of character almost impossible to conquer. Persuasion seems useless; there is no power to compel industry; downright laziness prefers ease by any means, and accepts sin with its pleasures and pains as it has dawdled through all other occasions of life. Personal influence, extended where the rigor of the law cannot reach, is the only method of attack upon this nearly impassable front.

Next to these two sources of evil can be ranked personal vanity, love of amusements, theatres, dancing, and a fondness for dress. All of them act as incentives, though to a regard for dress has been ascribed more force than it deserves; it is really a minor

reason compared with the love of admiration that takes its root in loneliness. While attributing so much force to this one cause, loneliness, sin itself should not be rated one iota less; but, because it is loneliness, the wrong of righteous humanity in allowing such friendliness to lie in wait all around one is unbounded. The unselfishness and respectability of home affection is very limited. For every woman who tries to help others there are fifty who shrink back.

There are also indirect causes arising from undue familiarity in company, in “society;” from too free intercourse between men and women, girls and boys; from too little observance by the parents of young people’s pursuits, and from the exclusion of older persons from the good times of the younger; from ill-regulated feeling; and from unhappy marriages, — entered upon without forethought or mutual requirements, and often only as a shelter or an “establishment,” — and from wretched pub-

lications. The measures already undertaken for the suppression of this last cause cannot reach the immense number of books admitted into family and public reading, stories written by men and women, of which the trashy, vulgar tales of newspapers stand at one extreme and a "Romance of the Nineteenth Century" at the other. Nothing but the general deepening of morality and of purer literary taste will ever prevent the treatment of such subjects. It cannot be effected by force, only again by individual watchfulness over one's self as writer or reader, and over one's acquaintances as far as personal influence may extend.

The enumeration of these causes, which will doubtless be corrected or increased by the reader, is given simply to show that every one of them is such an accidental cause that society and humanity should in this day be ashamed of its existence. There is not one of them that cannot be slowly uprooted, if all are in earnest, and if there are homes whose inmates

will all be equally anxious to help ; but anxious and loving parental fears or foolish prejudices or society's mandates dampen enthusiasm. Personal influence is relegated to that of some special conference or church, and the evil lingers. Not by "homes," not by laws, not by societies, is the evil to be eradicated, though all are helps ; but by personal influence, which must find support in public opinion and in the tone of education, else it will not develop into sufficient strength to be of permanent value. Public opinion must begin by regarding the man as equal offender with the woman ; and, though the law must punish each equally, the castigation of society must be the powerful deterrent. When those who lack honesty and refinement find it impossible to be received into society ; when, by parents, the wealth, intellect, or position of suitors are considered as of no value compared with their morality ; when they are refused as partners in the dance, either in the fashionable assembly

or the Irish picnic, — then will men feel that they are challenged to a loftier standard of action as requisition for friendship or marriage. We talk a great deal about the power of society, but are loath to exercise it. Society does already forbid innuendo of speech and open violation of conduct; but it does not forbid Platonic intimacies, and marriages in which there is little love and upon which lie the weight of prior claims.

Much is now said about the importance of teaching morality in the public schools. Advisable as such instruction may there be, and though indirectly it may largely conduce to rectitude, it cannot include every phase of morals. The education that is given through the pulpit and the press must also be indirect; but in the home, where the listeners and the pupils are one's own, the education should begin, and be so perfect that it needs never to be supplemented. It is in the home that it is so very largely neglected,—in homes, too, where all the

aims and wishes are for the children's benefit. Direct instruction should be derived from none other than parent or guardian, and should be given to children as they grow, not waiting till an engagement of marriage takes place, the instruction then being connected with an individual. The law of birth constitutes one of the child's earliest subjects of inquiry, and should be truthfully, though not fully, answered in its earliest years. Then the child knows in words the true law, but its full sense it does not comprehend till later; yet it does not start with a false term, and its progress from particular to general ideas is true, as its years increase its knowledge, which is thus planted deep in the mind, and ready for use when occasion demands. Parents who have had the bitter or sweet gift of experience should insist on early frankness. By such plain speaking, enforced by home example, and by such choice of language and such reverence of thought as shall make the child feel

that the production of life is the holiest law of nature, it will be impossible for him to have lax notions of morality in later life.

A very slow method of reforming the world, it is acknowledged, but no slower in regard to this evil than when education is spoken of as the ultimate cure of pauperism. This introduction of special moral teaching into every family has, however, a closer connection with pauperism than at first appears. If children are taught to understand reverentially the laws of birth, they will soon perceive that the conditions of birth are to be harmonized with its environment, and that it is robbery of the resources of the State to produce children who shall be paupers or invalids.

Such education should be given alike by the intelligent rich and poor, and is demanded by every feeling of chivalry and philanthropy; here, again, the removal of evil becoming a personal conflict.

Next to education, as the general deterrent

of evil, comes the creation of new avenues of employment, and of sufficient wages for any work that is done. The growing belief that the word "education" includes training of the hand is the surest augury that industrial education is to become an immense force in the destruction of evil. But such teaching must not be wholly left to the care of the State. The Associated Charities in many cities are establishing closer personal relations between the rich and the poor. True friendship cares for the industrial education of the friendless, and will create a foundation for better wages. The preventive still becomes one of personality, though the help of the State and of associations can be more prominent concerning industrial education than in regard to other means of prevention.

Allusion should also be made to the necessity of creating a healthier sentiment in the minds of the working-class in relation to household service. It is frequently looked upon as a

disgrace, and personal liberty is supposed to be obtained by making working hours include only those of the daytime; therefore, house-work is declined. A more just, rather than a kinder, spirit must pervade house-keepers. The recognition of the fact that they consider no work to be menial would establish better relations between the help and the family. Domestics must be allowed their right to personal peculiarities, and to a certain amount of time which shall be absolutely theirs, while an equality, rather than a condescension, of speech must be shown toward them.

Finally, as preventive, removed from direct personal influence, comes legislation. Any offence that is criminal in the woman should be visited with an equal grade of punishment upon the man. Reformatory institutions have been and still are beneficial; yet, when the influences of the "boarding-out" system are deemed better for the wards of the State than the associations of an institution, surely it may

not be unwise to ask whether greater personal inspection of the nature of evil and increased personal watchfulness over the unfortunate may not aid in lessening more rapidly its extent. Such oversight will recognize that there is as great a variety of temperament and character as there is of persons; will go to them when their room is at zero; when they have little food for days together, and in ninety cases out of a hundred are addicted to drink; will find some tender spot in their nature; will first improve their physical condition, then procure them employment, and finally will endeavor to arouse their moral nature. It is to the application of the work-remedy that every one should contribute. We must be willing to receive them back into our employment because they need us.

Surely, want of occupation, vanity, carelessness of behavior, and temperamental predisposition, can better be controlled by the person than by the State. Rescue work within

and without the home is an individual work rather than a public missionary service.

With a careful understanding of the causes and preventives of evil there is yet a future for those who help and who are to be helped ; and the “ disinherited children,” who now fill our asylums, crying for their unknown mothers, will become themselves in turn parents who shall find honest work for honest pay. Slowly, imperceptibly, will any change be effected ; but, at a time when woman’s position and duties are widening, the moral influence of the home is thereby extended, and on its teaching depends the morality of the world. Personal influence in the ball-room and the workshop, education of the young, whether poor or rich, and intelligent comprehension of other natures besides one’s own, will aid in devising *individual* measures for *individual* cases, until each sufferer finds strength to stand alone.



WHO'S WHO





WHO'S WHO ?

NO question has more servile terror or ostracizing power than this inquiry. However desirable it may be before an intimacy is formed, or copartnership in work undertaken, it has become imperative ere a nod of recognition is bestowed. Even if sudden philanthropy dictate the saving of a life, the hero and the spectators must know who has been saved. Cordiality changes its universal blandness into warmth when ancestors are well known. Not genealogical zeal or elderly kindness alone ask: Where does he belong? but fear of compromise raises the same query, and accompanies it with full notes. If we are to be known by our friends,

we care too often about who they are, rather than what they are.

An Englishman once said he had heard more concerning first families in America than in his own country. Most naturally was it so, for our peerage is ever changing. Lowell's poems and somebody's bitters may be advertised on the same page of the "Atlantic." "Family-trees" are no longer content with the "Mayflower" as a starting-point; but seek for social status in Saxon and Norman days, and trace their coat of arms to antediluvian fancies. Better an honest modern invention, like that of the New York millionaire, who, making his fortune by tobacco, chose for his insignia three tobacco leaves, with a Latin inscription, which, rendered into English, ran: —

" Snuff has bought it;

Who'd have thought it?"

Select summer hotels afford the best exemplifications of self-regard, for in them each one

feels that he pays for the liberty of not doing anything which he does not want to do. An "arrival," whose bearing or whose name is not a passport of distinction, may pass unnoticed for days or weeks, while a *distinguée* girl or man cannot walk the length of the piazza unremarked. Most curious are the sinuous turnings with which people who live in the same city ignore each other when in the same boarding-house, for the inconvenience of acquaintanceship on their return home would be much greater than that of any temporary avoidance. It is wonderful how quickly the desire for rest or meditation vanishes when some one arrives who is supposed to be worth knowing. Then social intercourse receives its full valuation. Those who are eagerly welcomed cannot understand the coolness and coldness of the world. Great men and women have little chance for judging society aright, for they find themselves sought, irrespective of antecedents, while average good people are left to realize

by their own experience how much lineage adds to appreciation of good purpose. A high rate of board per day does not give absolution from daily politeness. It is ludicrous to see the perplexity of some one who has paid a big weekly bill for being in, but not of, the crowd, when, suddenly, he discovers that he has missed a social opportunity. "Blue blood" cannot mingle with anything less cerulean; next to belonging to "a family," ranks belonging to the church. A Radical, a Unitarian, a Methodist, a Baptist, is each one degree farther removed than the preceding from the high recognition of society.

Some people are so afraid of being involved that they miss the evolution of themselves. Cosmopolitan or provincial behavior in a hotel is after all each one's own affair, but when the latter extends to the personal relation of a guest to his host it becomes reprehensible. If one is not willing to enlarge his acquaintance he had better never enter society; but, being there, he

should be the servant of all, especially of his entertainer. Introductions are too frequently matters of diplomacy rather than of good-will, and often are refused, if it is only the convenience of the host which is to be furthered thereby. As they are still required, it becomes difficult to manage a party; those invited being often preëngaged to each other for a conversation or a dance, so that there is no chance for the forced opportunities of presentations. Few people are old or free enough to speak to each other without the mediation of a third person. A most amusing instance of the consequence of such fearlessness was a scene between an elderly and middle-aged lady in a crowded supper-room on Beacon street. The younger one had eaten her salad and ices in unbroken silence; so had the elderly woman. At last the first ventured to remark that, as the room was very hot, the ice was refreshing.

“Yes,” was the long-drawn reply, coupled with the words, “Have I met you before?”

“No,” was the amused answer, “and perhaps we may never meet again; but I hoped I might take the liberty of speaking to you now.”

“Yes. I am Mrs. B., of D avenue. And you?”

“I am Miss W., of X street.”

“Ah! indeed! The ice is cooling.”

And the older lady, satisfied that the person's name and address had a familiar and correct sound to her ears, slowly drifted into a conversation which was more congealing than the ice.

When fame, however, heralds the advent of a stranger, invitations to behold and speak to him are eagerly accepted, clubs and social parties vying with each other in speeches and oysters. But, alas! if one is simply a lady or a gentleman from another city, or a side street of one's own town! Self-consciousness generally rebels at being invited for benevolent reasons, and few have the courage of a certain

woman at a notable assembly, who, on being asked why she was present, replied: "I am next-door neighbor." But, as at most receptions one meets people like one's self, and as at least one-third of the world is plain and awkward, would it not be well to insist on a forced growth of conscience, which should deter a young man from using his eye-glass to examine a young lady before he is introduced to her; and which should compel a young lady to instantly draw the unwilling victim into conversation? It is time for hostesses and patronesses to insist on their rights if guests have become the law-givers, and decline all introductions except those they desire. Some people cannot accept an invitation without bringing their personal caprices with them. Many elderly young men decline an introduction, as they "already have such an extensive circle." One such individual was asked to be presented to a lady who was sitting alone. He eyed her thoroughly, and declined. He

returned half an hour later, saying: "I'll be introduced to her now. I see several of the men have been talking to her. Her profile is not bad." "No," replied the lady. "When I asked you because she was my friend, you declined. Now I decline to present you."

One of Boston's oldest families gave a reception. Two scions of other old families attended, to whom the host said: "I'll introduce you to those ladies opposite," and he moved towards them. "Excuse us," said one of the men; "the ladies are of a peasant style of beauty; it is hardly worth while." The host bowed low in recognition of their far-seeing power, adding: "Yes, they are my nieces from the country, but I will not trouble you." No apology would he receive, though one was eagerly offered. The old gentleman was right; he wished to vindicate the honor of his house.

No one has any right to accept even the most general hospitality unless he accede to reasonable demands, but the fear that a young

man may not come again excites such mortal terror that he is allowed to do as he pleases, which means to seek the attractive girls. Then, as every woman has a number of friends as guests who are only delightful when known, she is obliged to seem unaware of their value because so many men decline introductions. The society phrase is, "I thank you; I see so many here whom I know that I will not trouble you;" and if the hostess persists, then is added, "Thanks, I'll speak to Miss ——, and come back to you." Woe to her if her persistency continues, for then must she go after the young man; he will never return to her.

The preponderance of women over men in every party is an evil which can only be remedied by the general dispersion of the men among the long trains of the ladies. In crowded receptions introductions by the hostess are impossible; the value of such parties consists in their being a full bill of discharge of social duties, at so much cost a plate or a

head. It is no more complimentary to one's vanity to be invited to such crowds, merely to be lost in them, than it is to be invited to a family dinner because the hostess does not know exactly whom to ask to meet you.

The naïvete of one's guests is sometimes very amusing. They think one is semi-literary, and that they shall meet such persons, and they come and find real-estate men and wholesale dealers in leather, or they go especially to meet the boot and shoe trade and find an essayist and a historian. They fancy their entertainer is homœopathic, and find both old and new schools present. They consider one as pious, and the Sunday paper tells them that piety has had a dance and an elegant supper. It is considered odd when extremes meet in private houses, though it is taken as a matter of course when they come together on political occasions.

A plain lady living in an unfashionable street invited a gentleman of leisurely life

to her home, because in her simplicity she thought he seemed lonely, though he only suffered from æstheticism. He came, and at the close of the evening observed to her: "I had no idea that I should meet so many distinguished people at *your* house," his voice unconsciously emphasizing the pronoun. Such a remark stands in striking contrast to that of Dr. Holmes, who said to his hostess: "Make use of me in any way I can help you most." That was high-bred courtesy; he came to serve her and make others happy. If each would believe, as simply as did the Doctor, that such ability was more or less in each one's power, how agreeable society would become, and how happy would all be! But people torment themselves by thinking that they have neither use nor beauty, therefore they stand in corners looking suspicious or bored. Young men can depart from a room when the pressure of average persons upon them becomes too

great, but girls must wait until the hour when carriages are ordered, and patiently endure the experience of never being sought. They are wall-flowers, and as such must cultivate self-respect and remember that if they do not delight a young man's fancy, they yet are beloved in their homes. Of course there is fault all round; wall-flowers are to blame for being wall-flowers; a belle cannot appreciate the situation; it is better to go to cooking-schools and to read at Old Ladies' Homes, than to submit to being snubbed in society. If the wall-flower element is inborn it makes no matter how many elegant parties a girl may give, at the next German she may not be taken out, even once, by any of the young men who have drank her wine and fed on her boned turkey. It was not so a few years ago. Then the fact that one had given a party was full indemnification for being a wall-flower, and invitations to dance were certain for at least

half the season. Now, "there is quite as much humiliation as fun about society."

A young girl, burdened with awkwardness, yet with capacity for gentle resentment, overheard a young man ask another to be presented to her. The latter hesitated, inspected her, and at last condescended to consent, saying: "Well, trot her out." The crowd, passing by, separated, and he was led up to her and their names were exchanged. She coolly surveyed him from head to foot, while he tried to find something to say, for her examination checked his ordinary volubility. After a moment or two, she turned to the gentleman who had brought him to her and said: "I have seen enough, trot him back." And back he went, with flushed face and dejected mien.

It would be well for wall-flowers to organize for self-protection. Toy watches might be engrafted on bracelets, and then, with one eye on the minute hand, and the other on her partner, the young lady could tell when time is up, and

dismiss her three-minute chevalier with a knowing glance. There is as much fault to be found with grateful girls as with rude men; but the girls are grateful from humility and the men rude from selfishness.

The law of supply and demand obtains in society as well as in trade. If one is a wall-flower by necessity of her nature she cannot win the laurels of belleship; but if she is refused them because her father is neither the president of a bank nor a professional man the withholding of them is contemptible. A belle, in full possession of her faculties, can hold her court wherever she may be, in spite of inheritances of quack medicines, patents on domestic inventions, and Bonanza mines, except in the charmed circle of first families. Maryland has its Eastern Shore, Philadelphia its Walnut street, New York its Fifth avenue, and Boston the small radius on the north side of Commonwealth avenue, and the northern end of its first four or five streets crossing the

avenue. Within these and like sacred precincts elsewhere, the answer to the question, Who's who? must be given before entrance is permitted. Once within them one would doubt if society existed elsewhere.

A matter-of-fact damsel asked a bright, jolly girl who danced every night, if she were not tired of going so much into society. "Why," she replied, "I can't do that, I only go to parties." Are all the people worth knowing or marrying limited to a certain set? A rag-picker who carried her rags on her back congratulated herself on the marriage of her daughter to a man who carried his rags in a hand-cart.

There is no single feature of American uppishness which gives more occasion for alarm than this desire to move in upper circles. It destroys simplicity, underrates home life, makes us look down on average people and value opinion as an expression of some special person rather than as of worth

in itself. There is as much wit spoken around the table laden with crockery as at that shining with silver; as much logical reasoning, humble scientific research and reverence, out of society as in it. Three-story brick residents can discuss books as well as people. There are two facts ever to be remembered regarding society: first, that it exists everywhere; or that there is society out of society; secondly, that there is a foolish ambition everywhere, which, rightly termed, is discontented snobbishness. At a certain semi-snobbish dead-in-earnest-to-succeed literary set, the absence of well-known writers was conspicuous, while the impressiveness of rising talent was oppressive. "Is every one here a professor?" was asked. "Professors or professional^s who will soon be recognized as creating Boston thought," was the reply. Such self-content is really better, happier, than distrusting aping of another. Each circle has its own public, and yet the circles intermingle.

Snobbishness is not confined to one set of people. Emphasized by fashion or literary pretensions it spreads from village to city. It exists in sardine factories and in palatial mansions; it is met with at picnics and dances as well as at dinner or conversation parties. The links are close.

When a society young man ventures to marry a non-society girl enough comments are made to furnish Miss Braddon with material for a new novel. Is not a lady a lady anyway, whether in public or in private life, whether a school-teacher or a book-keeper, or living in a secluded street? And yet, if she marries *up* in the world, how fortunate she is considered! Simple, lovely, intelligent young women, respectful, upright young men still exist, and make the delight of home and society, as do the few chivalric individuals who will talk to lonely girls at parties for more than an hour rather than leave them alone, the latter in their humility never fancy-

ing that they mean to offer themselves to-morrow.

Amidst the comfortable old families, who were merely born and have never risen nor fallen, a quiet laugh circulates when people like circus-dancers desire to leap through one paper circle to another, forgetting the *débris* they leave behind. Hundreds of persons are fortunately so far advanced that they believe a home is "good form." Society belles often marry ministers, in their efforts to embrace noble ideals. So there is reason to believe that true values will at last be estimated aright. Where there is real kindness and tact both men and women are less mindful of their social position. Agreeableness, whether in artist, editor, wholesale jobber and clerk, will make its own way, and mere exclusiveness on the score of pedigree, must, in time, yield to those who have a full mind, a noble heart, and a kindly wit.

It is said that those who are sure of the

purity of their ancestral line are always gracious. Great is the charm of the high-bred air, the delicate features, and the clear tones of voice of one of long and high descent. Such distinction holds in age as in youth, in the wearer of black alpaca, and in her who is clothed with maroon velvet. But it is the certainty of a righteous cause which should create self-respect, and the consciousness of noble purpose in others which should make one forgetful of their ancestry. Yet by our manners are we first and most often judged. Frequently there is not time, or it seems like presumption, or it is an impossibility to try and know another; but our manners, like the markings and outlines of diatoms, will determine to what species and genera we belong. The high-bred air and the free and easy way testify of birth, the peculiar style of each person making the mould for the next generation. On his own material must each one work, and not accept his inheritance

as an unchangeable quantity. In spite of effort to be unlike any but one's self, lineage creeps through the Puritan conscience; and energy, though softened, still lingers in many a rough reflexion of kindness, or in unnecessary activity of speech.

Manners should exist as a growth of their own, for they are needed long before complete development of the nature is attained. The foundation of the different varieties of good manners is the same, for "fine manners are the mantle of fine minds," says an old proverb. They must be established on simple, sincere purposes, else their polish will soon vanish. Affectation of every sort destroys its own intent. Any attempt at greatness of thought, extensive reading, or forced wit, which is not true, is a form of hypocrisy.

Yet it will not answer to be merely natural, for that often means having a rough, ungraceful exterior, though a kindly heart. Only polished saints can afford to always act as they

feel. Enough personal attention should be given to manners to enable one to see his faults, but not his good points. If there is a strong desire to make everybody happier, if the beauty and joy of life are felt, feelings will naturally express themselves in manners that will be agents of peace, mirth, and comfort. They must be trained, however, by the old-fashioned means of attention to the carriage of the body ; by the posture in sitting ; by looking attentive when listening or pretending to listen ; by bowing at the right degree of inclination, which should be neither a sweeping curve nor a right angle with eyes cast on the ground ; and by regard to commas, periods, and tones of voice in conversation. Before a man has spoken he is involuntarily judged by his motions, then by modulations of his voice, next by his language, and lastly by his sense.

Manners, involuntarily, have some predominant mark. Through them is felt, at once, in

some people, the power of noble command, of a self-poised, thinking being who can rightfully assume leadership. In others there is an exquisite grace which moulds strength into forms of beauty, that is found in persons who have an instinctive sense of proportion. Again, in others there is a pathos that recalls the tenderest part of one's experiences. The manners of a well educated circle are like a symphony, in which one takes the *Andante*, another the *Adagio*, and still another the *Allegretto* movement; each has its own charm, and the whole fills the observer with a sense of delicious being, with a feeling of consolation and exaltation.

The self-control that puts aside its own preferences and seems pleased, is not hypocrisy; it is the exchangeable silver coin of society, without which intercourse would become rough and snappish. It is not sufficient to stop at being good; advance must be made to fine manners. Nor need one be afraid of being too

earnest or impassioned, for such characteristics are consistent with courtesy. What eloquence is in power to a man manners are to a woman. They must often be started on adventitious means, as when the consciousness of much soft ruffling round the neck helps in turning the head more gracefully. The art of never showing haste is one method of cultivating an outward, physical grace. Opportunities of saying kind, true words to friends should not be missed; admiration of people often leads to unconscious copying of their manners, the imitation fitting so well that it becomes rightful ownership. Even when old, and tired, and sad, the charm of pleasant manners cannot be destroyed, for all sense of self, or of endeavor to be brilliant, has been lost in the constant desire to draw out the good and bright in others. Sympathy, tact, earnestness, appreciation, cheerfulness, — a sense of humor, if possible, — grace of motion and speech, make good manners. They are as a

halo surrounding the real person whose character still keeps its integrity.

Because, in the complexity of life, we forget that each should be a unit, working as best he can, that what he does and what he thinks and what he is, embraces all with which another is concerned, is it constantly asked, Who's who? The subtle influences of pure and high birth are never to be scorned, for they intrench their possessor within a stronghold which makes it easy for him to bear the assaults of fortune or the rudeness of men. The high-bred faces win our affection, the noble manner commands our obedience; but with refinement must go strength, else the first is insipid. No inheritance is ever a compensation for the want of self-activity. Humanity has as many insignia as there are noble individuals. A person who is only so much of himself, multiplied by imitation of others, minus somebody else, is a wearisome sum in human arithmetic. Truth and sympathy lie at the basis of all fine manner,

and when these exist the horny hand of the farmer and the gentle palm of the aristocrat can meet in cordial grasp of inward equality.

It is snobbish, aggressive, and zealous to envy the well-born, or to speak disparagingly of another's useful qualities because his manners are delightful. Knowledge of who's who marks the careful observer; recognition of work, the honest judge. After the first question of "Where does he belong?" is answered by glancing down the vistas of inheritance, comes another, What is he in himself? On that reply alone depends fellowship. Let American aping of others and social fear never forget to profit by learning the lesson of regard for all that is noble, in answer to these inquiries. Let American independence and morality transfer what it values into its own possession, so that it may bless others with the warmth of human sympathy, and of earnest purity of purpose. Purpose makes manner; the reflected light of manner shines again on purpose, and makes intensity radiant with beauty.



CASTE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY





CASTE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY.

SOCIETY in America is not an entity. It is rather the reflection of the mood of the individual who is contemplating it, the incarnation of certain tastes, and has neither locality nor measurement. For some it possesses elasticity, for others immobility ; all desire to enter where many have disappeared in an apotheosis of self-laudation, and when there, find that their circle is not society, which is ever beyond and ever narrowing.

One lady, a leader of Boston fashion, stated that, though "society" consisted of about twenty-five families, yet in the invitations to a general ball it might be safe to include from

four to six hundred persons. Society, though not existing *per se*, is deified as a goddess; its decrees are passports, or edicts, of social banishment and death; a knowledge of its laws is the preliminary, and obedience to them the final, requisite for admission. There is no New England, no New York, no Western society; there was Southern society, founded on inheritance of name, on ownership of land and slaves; but so long as there are annual governmental changes in the body politic, and constant reverses of private fortune through the money-markets and opportunities for Bonanza stock, and the advantages of high-school in the East and of college education in the West are offered free to all, there never can be a dominant force, — society.

Manner conquers society sooner than wealth or education; an individual is relegated to his proper social sphere, in the minds of all spectators, as soon as he enters a room. The depth of his bow, the tones of his voice, and the

breadth of his smile have averaged him. Manner, however, is constantly reinforced by mind, and the republican mind is one of growth. The absurdity of American social life is to talk of entering society; for, as soon as an American tries to bring society into focus to be interviewed, it divides itself into numerous facets of prismatic brilliancy. As a protest against any attempt to define society stands Mrs. Whitney's "We Girls;" in which some girl invites some one "next" to her, and that next some one next in turn to her, till finally the whole village is related in a community of interests.

This constant enlargement of a social sphere, or the infinite subdivisions of acquaintanceship, prevents society (granted for the moment that such an entity exists) from being an unified power for evil or good; while, because there is no such thing as society in itself, but circles of individuals combining for social purposes, these circles represent the social and educa-

tional force of life in its less specialized aspects. The absence of any one social power is the safety-valve of American life ; and any person who has been so unfortunate as to have lived, moved, and had his social being in only one set becomes thoroughly provincial.

The power of society as a unit reached its fullest exemplification in the days of the early French salons. The salon was to Paris what the newspapers and monthlies now are to us. Then the salon made public opinion, and literary criticism was a matter of experience and reflection. Even now the French critic imbibes the mental atmosphere of his equals, and thinks and weighs before he writes ; whilst many of our critics go tired from the theatre, lecture, or concert to the newspaper office, to have put in type their fresh opinions, — perhaps slightly tinged by the headache or their somnolent condition, — which the public next morning adopt as the general way of right thinking ; forgetting that a critic is

one person, after all, and that the impressions of an evening or of quick reading are less valuable than the criticisms of lengthier observation and reflection. Our critics are able, and honest and true, as far as in their power lies, but under the necessity of daily production, which must injure original quality and expression ; yet they exercise upon the public the formative power of the old salon, and render null any necessity for its existence.

The second reason for the absence of salons lies in the non-existence of any one circle of people who, by virtue of inheritance, actual deed, or promissory note, can definitely establish their own social boundaries. American life is too busy for definition ; men are too tired, women too anxious, to feel the delight of constant recreation through conversation at one another's firesides. We are all so willing to be hospitable by the blazing warmth on our own purchased or ancestral andirons, that there are few who go out for

others' entertainment. We are all at home — to nobody. Moreover, in a salon half the world were eager listeners, forgetful of themselves; but now we all must talk to prove our position, express ourselves to show that we have mind, or else look wise, hoping to realize, by the swelling on our brows, the growth of the thought within.

American society is an anomaly which must puzzle all those who do not believe in it; who do not see that its varying centres are but eddies on the surface of the fixed conviction that one man is the equivalent of another in capacity, and that his failure to prove it by results is the consequence of circumstances beyond his individual control. It is this belief which constitutes the essence of American impudence, boasting, aggressiveness, want of grace, and knock-you-down manner. It is also the source of our sturdy independence, our valuation of character as the final estimate, our reliance upon the common-sense

of our enemy, rather than upon the glittering generalities and evasions of our friends. As soon as the social variations are perceived we become conscious that caste rules in American life with an iron rod, tempered only by the fiery furnace of much wealth or rare intellectual ability. The lower we descend in what is called social life the more perceptible become its demarkations. In the working-classes, its sway is omnipotent. A marriage between a laundry maid and a washerwoman's son is contrary to all the rules of propriety, and ends in family feuds. The regular visitant at hotel cupboards who receives pie is farther removed from the tattered mendicant at backdoors than a member of the diplomatic corps from a native of Washington. In a certain well-known alley resided a shrewd brother and sister of twelve and fourteen, who assigned to each of the other dwellers his proper place in the social status of the by-way, imposing upon them

corresponding sumptuary laws of their own devising. These little magnates stayed at home and sent their agents begging; all food obtained was delivered into their keeping, and then portioned out, as the Educational Bureau would say, not according to the "illiteracy of each section, but according to its geographical area." Shapeless pieces of bread and cold flapjacks were for the tenants of cellars and attics; muffins and tidbits of croquettes were for those who occupied the ground-floor and middle stories of the tenements.

Among the working-women is a feeling of exclusiveness most noticeable, while with working-men it is no more prominent than with professional men. "It is this spirit of caste," says a working-woman of fifty years, "which keeps us all down. If we could nag one another it would be some gain; but we avoid one another instead. There is no union among us, never was, except for a little while through the French International

Association, which has died out. We never can raise ourselves from the bondage of ill-paid labor till we combine, and most of us would rather starve to death than associate with those beneath us." Another one complains that "the skilled workwomen pride themselves too much upon their skill to be willing to pull up the unskilled; just as in the professions a good lawyer or physician will not take a poor partner. It is social ambition, caste, that rules us; it begins with us, and goes up and up to kings and emperors. A woman with many servants despises her with one; and she with one despises the woman who does her own work; and she who does her own work looks down upon her who goes out to work; and the one who goes out to do special housework scorns the scrub-woman, who is the end of woman-kind."

Many of these people feel that the higher grades of labor can be protected only by

recognition of social lines, and talk of "the laziness and ignorance of the lower class of working-women." Even when out of employment, or, perhaps, engaged in some "uncongenial occupation as a temporary makeshift," they still feel keenly that they "belong elsewhere." "An honest working-woman," said one of them, "whether of the upper or lower grades of labor, holds herself infinitely superior to the trashy, flashy sort. We may not get work, but we can go from work to poverty, from poverty to exhaustion, from exhaustion to death, but not to sin,—those who follow that are a different class, with which we have nothing to do."

In a conversation with several of them it was asked: "What is the real grievance of the working-women?" And the general answer was that it was due to the spirit of caste, which prevented combination and coöperation, the two agents that could lighten the burdens of ill-paid labor; yet they had suffi-

cient intelligence to see that social union among themselves must first be effected. The stern self-restraint, the power of self-sacrifice, the delicacy of taste, refinement of feeling, appreciation of knowledge, and acts of touching kindness to one another, that are found among hundreds of them, do not negative the statement that the social line, based on kinds of labor, is closely drawn among them.

“Kindness based upon equality!” exclaimed one woman. “No, it is kindness based on caste. It is Arlington street and Fifth avenue that make the North End and the Battery. Employers don’t care for employés. If a firm give their girls parlors, lunch or sleeping-rooms, it isn’t because they care, but because they can get more out of us if we are comfortable. Your republican government doesn’t do away with caste; it is the population to a square foot that makes poverty, and according to the laws of caste it is only for the poor to emigrate. Did you ever hear of a rich man

emigrating to make room for others? He squats forever, and it isn't called squatting. Talk of emigration and agriculture to factory and city folks, who have neither money nor health to emigrate! We working-people don't envy you your pie or your pictures, if we can have bread. It is the deeper thing which makes us indignant: it is being called fools and simpletons by our employers, and bearing it, because we must have the one dollar. Labor is owned, and women are owned more than men, and will be until they can dare to combine and dare to refuse offers of ill-paid work, larded with harsh words and lunch privileges."

Is there rank, then, in all industrial pursuits? A tailoress declares that "Nowhere are the lines of caste more strictly drawn than among tailoresses and sewing-girls." Those on "custom-work" and those on "sale-work" need not necessarily know each other. Here is a classification given by one who under-

stands, works, and aids others in various ways :
“ Employments of working-people are either subjective or objective ; one cannot consort with another. Under the first are included (1) the stenographer, (2) the newspaper hack, (3) the type-writer, (4) those engaged in life-insurance business and in any sort of nursing ; the second division embraces (1) mercantile women, (2) saleswomen, (3) tradeswomen, and (4) servants, who are Pariahs, so to speak, in the eyes of all other working-women.”

These words plainly indicate wherein lies the difficulty of obtaining good domestic service. There is a certain loss of personal independence as to hours and meals, but housework ranks lowest in the scale of honest labor ; ambition, uppishness, or aspiration, is of national growth. The proof-reader by universal testimony ranks highest in the scale of laborers ; for good proof-reading requires not only an excellent elementary education, but also an intuitive mind. A copy-holder often advances to be a

proof-reader ; whereas a type-setter seldom or never becomes a copy-holder. The most amusing instance of drawing the line is seen in the superbly quiet manner in which the “ladies” behind the counters of large dry-goods establishments regard the “women” in thread-and-needle stores ; and these in turn look down upon the “girls” employed in confectioners’ shops, and the lower kind of *omnium-gath-erum* stores always to be found in the neighborhoods of the poor. They all may stand upon their feet throughout the day and sell goods ; but that is all they have in common, except through incidental charitableness. Again, newspaper-work ranges from that of the regularly paid “contributor” on certain subjects, to that of the person with the ready wit to puff up patent medicines or do a job in twenty minutes.

In talking with the thoughtful working-woman one is struck by the philosophical terms,—obtained through processes of imitation

and by imbibing mental atmospheres, — which spring as readily to her lips as do the words “feeling,” “tone,” “values,” to those of writers on art. Such women analyze life, lay down propositions, premises, and reason from them. Very often their foundation is weak. One of them, whose analysis of the mental requisites for different kinds of labor was very keen, observed: “There are sensuous and super-sensuous classes. The super-sensuous care less about the technique of their work, and fail in execution, but they are capable of improvement, if lofty motives are appealed to, and are ready to encourage stumblers. They long to be all they feel, and their lives are full of striving and failures. The sensuous could be represented by those girls who don’t know, and don’t know that they don’t know ; they are honest and virtuous, but their tastes are on a low plane.”

The working-women are struggling against the identical limitations within themselves

which philanthropists and believers in social coöperation and those of notable good-will in churches have always felt. These women recognize the power of mutual aid; they acknowledge that employers are not individual tyrants, and that their only chance for a freer, happier life lies not in strikes, but in combinations, backed by a public sentiment in favor of equal wages for men and women. Then, the more intelligent daily see the hopelessness of any such attempt at union, on account of the intensity of the caste feeling among them; the enjoyments and occupations of each class are distinct.

One more generalization can be given, made by one who is doing all she can to elevate the character of her fellow-workers: "Caste is a nuisance to those who wish to get into what you call 'society,' and it is our curse. There are among us (1) the sensuous class, those who dance; (2) the domestic class, who stay by themselves and get their own meals. or live

with their parents in rooms, who work all day and sew all night, and go to church on Sunday, or remain at home without gadding about; (3) then the God-forsaken class, who stay honestly in their attics and die by inches, who are not skilled workwomen by birth, and who never can be, any more than all can be artists, but who can do slopwork, and starve to death (Why don't the skilled pity the unskilled, and look only to the slow process of better-born generations to do away with the amount of unskilled labor?); and (4) there are the servants," and she shrugged her shoulders, as if mention of them were needless.

The desire for combination, as the means of a general elevation, obtains among the more thoughtful portion of the women. It does not follow that because these women do not know much they therefore think little. Life experience has made them rich in thought, and the socialistic and free-thinking papers urge them on to clearer definition of their needs, often

in a wrong direction. Many of them have attempted the formation of clubs and societies of their own, which have almost always failed, if for no other reason than because they have so little surplus time and strength for anything which is not daily bread. When entertainments have been provided for them the very fact that they were for them included a stigma. Friendly and social evenings have also been established for them here and there; but only when even any suspicion of kindness has been omitted have they been successful. This unwillingness of the more intelligent and lady-like to associate with the less intelligent renders it still more difficult for others to form any classes for their instruction or make social attempts for their enjoyment. The spirit of caste dominates them far more than people in society. Some will not come, fearing patronage of the rich; others, from dread of being ignored by those of a higher grade, who yet work for self-support. The Irish feel this in-

cubus of caste far less than the Americans. Difference in station is an Old-World fact with which the Irish and their ancestors have long been familiar. Their church frowns on any combination for intellectual purposes which might disintegrate their religious faith, and the sodalities themselves supply avenues for social intercourse, with the added benefit of spiritual instruction.

Among the Western women who are farmers, caste is founded on the aristocracy of energy; she who makes the best butter, "raises" the finest hens, "steps round smartest," and cooks the biggest dinner for the largest number of farm hands, is the leader. At the harvest festivals and the county fairs, the wives of the poor and of the rich farmer meet on the same social plane; the one assuming and the other acknowledging the superiority born of deftness and strength. The hired girl is a neighbor's daughter, who will soon marry, have a farm, and be just the same as the woman for whom she

is now working ; so there is no snubbing her. Whoever is the best cook and the earliest riser will have the means for a better dress, and in all meetings will be the equal of her stalwart husband, in his coarse, ready-made suit ; while the weak, inefficient woman stays at home. has no new dresses, and misses the stimulus of the Grange meetings and agricultural shows. Poor woman ! Children have multiplied, and the farm income has not kept pace with their growth. Yet she is the socially recognized equal of her better-to-do neighbor in all but energy. Caste is founded in the far West on its primal, lawful ground of ability, whether physical or mental.

In other circles the demarcations of caste are felt more than they are seen, but the test of consciousness is more absolute than that of sight. It is, after all, a personal feeling, far more indefinable since the position of women has so widely changed. She is no longer merely the house-keeper, obedient wife, or

needle-and-thread mother. Almost all have some interest outside their homes. Once only Quaker women spoke in church. Now all churches recognize that the power of deposing a man from the pulpit, or of elevation to it, rests with the women; they really rule the church. "Women have no business outside of their homes," said a countryman. But his wife went to a prayer-meeting, and a neighbor reported that "she had made a feeling, eloquent prayer." The husband slightly winced. She went to a temperance gathering, and spoke fervently and piously, and the men talked of Farmer B.'s wife; and Farmer B. "smartened up," got his wife a hired girl, and declared that "his wife wan't one of the show-off kind, but that she begun low down in a prayer-meeting and worked her way up."

As this ability to manage outside affairs increases, women will have too little time to be patient with the limitations of caste, for

they must choose their working comrades from those who possess personal power, though not station. Already has the "committee life" of women done much to break down society's barriers. "Oh, yes, I took the initiative!" said a fashionable woman, "and invited her first. I knew her on the Board of —. Never heard of her before; but she knows, and has style too; she is a lady." The society leader recognized the words that really open wide all doors; knowledge, manner, *savoir faire*, are imperative. Saints are charitable toward outward failings, but busy and gay people demand the passport of manner.

Since women have acquired such complex duties or relations the varieties of society within a city's limits are queer. The superabundance of women perhaps has necessitated the frequent reading of a poem or an essay, as an introduction to the later supper. The washerwoman has her "*bric-à-brac coterie*." The wife of a small store-keeper invites you to

pass a pleasant, social evening at her residence, and ghastly poems are recited, and original songs, on crumpled paper drawn from waistcoat pockets, are sung. The wholesale merchant takes the retail trader to dinner at a hotel, not to his club or to his house. At a reception of "choice friends," loose, disjointed kid gloves encase long, lank fingers, which give lingering pressure on introduction, as a deep voice asks, "Where do you belong?" or, "What are you doing for society or the world?" or, "Have you a calling?" If one could be sure that annual revenues would never fail one would like to exclaim: "I do nothing, am nobody, and aspire to nothing! I live on my estate." A widower says: "Since my wife's death I am endeavoring to maintain her social reunions. Will you come and read?" and you go, — and find the pictures near the ceiling. The height at which pictures are hung establishes, in the eyes of the social connoisseur, the society standing of

their possessor. Money can buy color and frames ; inherited taste alone can hang them. All other signs may fail, but the height of a picture will ever be the true indicator of one's social position. Intellectual entertainment is no test of one's social standing ; the lowest and the highest are eager to offer this *pièce de résistance*. It takes the place of supper, or whets the appetite for something substantial, and is as often the bane as the delight of an evening. People are no longer supposed to possess enough intelligence to talk for two hours at their own sweet will, but the topic must be assigned by the paper, essay, *brochure*. Even coffee-parties are intellectualized ; a kettle-drum, a ball, or a huge reception, remains as the only entertainment incapable of mental improvement. When every one can offer original mental food who shall lead ? The *coterie* in the side street is as large as that on the fashionable avenue. Within the course of a few days a lady went to four lunches, two

kettle-drums, and two evening receptions, and did not meet the same person twice. The larger the city the more conspicuous is this variety of circles. Where is society? At each door there were carriages, and each house was well appointed. Some would fold their napkins; others would throw them crumpled on the table. Some would have wine, others water. In one house it was etiquette to remove your bonnet; in another, to wear it. Here "gents" were invited; there, "some of our best society." In one the men carried opera hats, and wore white cravats, and bowed deeply; in another, frock-coats and flat scarfs, and shook hands. All and each averred they knew how, and all and each secretly feared they didn't.

The outcome of all this variety is that while there is caste there is no ruling force. The most exquisite kindliness and the freshest *bon-mots* are met with among people forever unknown to fame. Clever talk and story-telling

are often most graphic among those who read little. Literary satire, analysis, and epigrammatic wit abound among the more cultured; and a quiet sympathy, restful manner, and keen, general intelligence, with a thorough knowledge of one's own specialty (where there is such), among the most cultured. It often requires moral courage to invite a friend to simply a family dinner, or to ask an acquaintance to meet an undistinguished guest, to hear an unauthorized voice; a social evening is burdened with a purpose, belittling sociability and rendering impossible the grace and freedom of the French salon. To many, a celebrity has a mercantile value, as increasing the number of those who will come to them; the more noted the celebrity, the more are they "in society." Only let it be remembered, the grocer's wife, who lives over her husband's store, also issues invitations to meet some one who has written something, or is going to do it; and guests of as

much real intelligence will be met with in the retail merchant's house as in that of the wholesale jobber.

The timidity and ever-obtruding self-consciousness of people prevent them from constantly asking the same persons; they are afraid lest it is fancied they like them. A sympathetic spirit in the host and real devotion to intelligent culture are the only means by which American society can approach the merits of the old salon. Subordination of one's self, interest in others' gifts, and willingness to speak of one's own if asked, will conquer caste and render society delightful. A friend's friends are generally the persons who consent neither to be amused nor to amuse others; but they exist in every circle. Introductions are like courses at dinner, — we have hardly found of what one is composed before another dish or stranger is presented.

There will always be worthy unknown people whom one ought to know in all ranks

of American life. The clerk, on eight hundred a year, wonders that you have not read his brother's article in the last magazine; the concocter of hair-oil in an obscure village supposes every one has heard of her contribution to society's physical welfare; you take tea in a little room, and eat pickles, cheese, and bread with a lady and gentleman well known for their devotion to humanity (you never heard of them before, but that is your ignorance); you are invited to a reception for the president of — (you were unaware of such an association); you have pamphlets of real excellence sent you (the authors bore all the expenses of publication, so little were they appreciated); you meet with the wife of a representative to the General Court (you had never heard of her husband); cards come on uncanny paper, asking you to meet an artist or musician who exhibits his pictures or sings in some unknown hall or church vestry; you meet with a noble author, and can hardly recall his books, or a

great scientist or genius, and the conversation resembles that of a French grammar. And so it goes. But all this *is society*, and it is all fine and true, though with foibles that amuse, and little awkwardnesses that grate, and stiffness that chills. Every one is of importance in his own circle; how important will be shown by his universality.

Some English ladies, in lunching at the house of one of the best families, said that it was the first they had seen where manners were so simple that they dared to ask if they might see the laundry and the kitchen. People are more shy than cold, and more self-conscious and self-deprecatory than shy; they honestly do not think any one can care to know them, or that they can give, in their own personality, any pleasure. Why is it that, with caste in every direction, the best society, as such, does not exist? It is owing to wretched self-consciousness, ambitions, and want of calm self-respect, and it is the real excellence, the

glory of American life, that there is no such unit as society; while both the evil and the excellence are inherent in republicanism and our gratuitous public-school education. Theoretically, all children are educated in the public schools; practically, business interests demand mutual assistance. Universal suffrage gives the same right to the clodhopper, author, or merchant. Any one may be where some one else is, for force of will and long-headedness conquer. This is what our Declaration of Independence stands for. Are our children to repeat, "All men are born free and equal," and then to court social superiority?

The only position that has ever been acknowledged cheerfully by the American people has been the small circle of first-class historians, poets, and scientists. Prescott, Motley, Ticknor, Agassiz, Bryant, Longfellow were — Parkman and Lowell still are — leaders of intellectual, social life, because each unites an exquisite kindliness and active sym-

pathy for others' needs with his own attainments. There is also political society, of all degrees of honesty and grace, but towards even the purest statesmen there are varying degrees of personal animosity, kindled by difference of opinion, which leave him a doubtful social empire. Certain families have always stood for certain ideas, and extended hospitality to those of the same faith. Money, position, or literary success is generally supposed to unbar the gates of caste; but money does not do it for those of the first generation, though their children may be accepted. Position is of variable tenure, and small literary success is cheap. Force of character is worth a dozen magazine articles, and if the small number of our best intellectual men had been anything less than manly, simple, and true in their nature, American aggressiveness would never have honored them as social leaders. Character, not intellectual force, is what republicans worship; but discontented aspir-

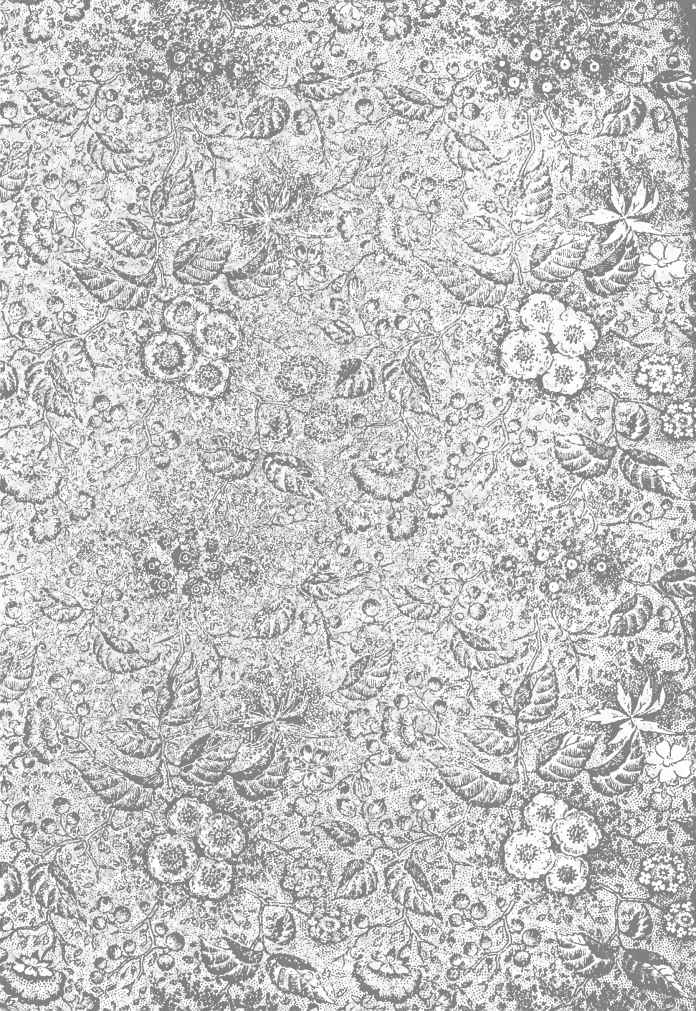
ants are parasites on society, which adores literary mediocrity.

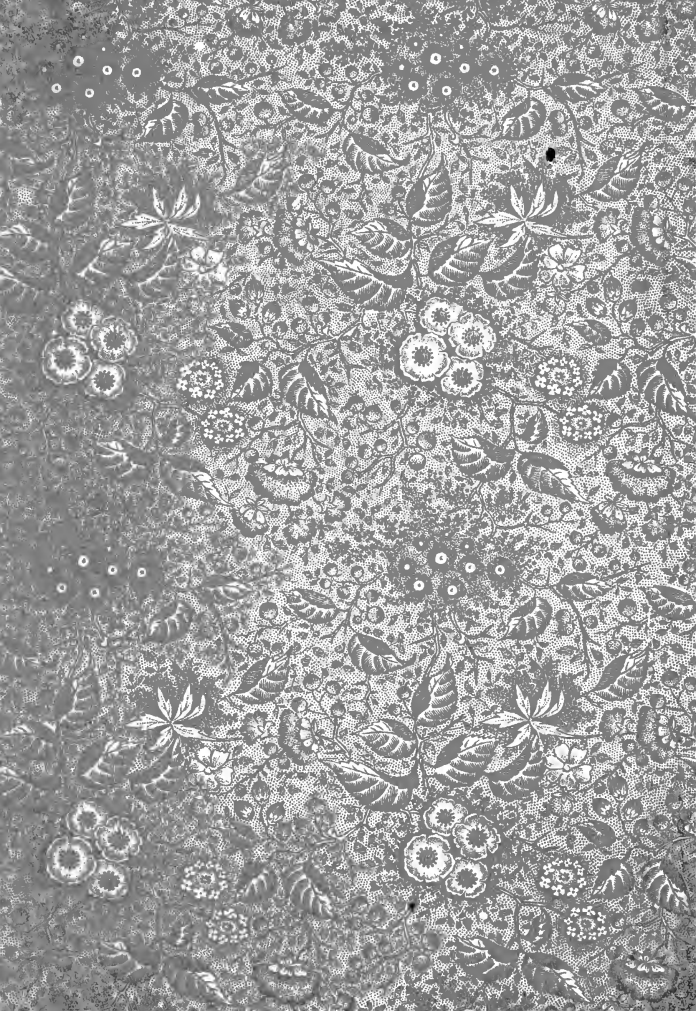
Common-sense can never grant that only a few know what society means, though willing to confess that a few alone understand the laws of conventionality. Republican common-sense cares to adapt the means to the end, and if it can have a jolly time in its own parlors, — if it can think and read and write papers and dance and sing, it is not going to be told that it is not — society. Each one is worth the whole of himself; it was thus with his ancestors, and will be so with his descendants; every true democrat will create a little world around himself by virtue of his own being, whilst the old aristocrat will appeal to inheritance and land. When our presidents are often the unknown third man, brought from comparative obscurity to retire again into mellowed light; when presidents' wives cannot banish wine from the tables nor frizzles from the brows of the women, — are

Americans to talk of the power of society? The power of tact, of sympathy, of native force, of real intelligence, not of idle appreciation, is the only power that American individualism will ever consent to honor. Our high schools and the minimum examinations in colleges will make it more and more possible for cultured circles to exist on small incomes; a love for scholarship, enjoyment of great works, and perception of the opportunities that the simplest forms of nature offer for original research, even to the child botanist, will make literary life less a sham, power and money less a god, until good manners and simplicity of thought and life are as universal possessions in our republic as they are in our theories. Caste in its unkindest or most exclusive forms will gradually disappear in the reality of our living, though it may always remain as an undefined aroma from unknown distances.

But society, — where is it? Everywhere.







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 018 603 055 2